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The Polarization of White Evangelicals

Condensed from a talk given by Kevin den Dulk at the Conservative/Progressive Summit, Hauenstein Center on May 5, 2017

The banner headline about religion in the 2016 presidential election jumped out from the exit polls: Eight-in-ten white evangelical voters reported Republican candidate Donald Trump as their choice. A few months on, political scientists have nuanced that number with better data, but no amount of analysis will challenge the basic fact that white evangelicals reprised their role in 2016 as a reliable bloc within the Republican coalition. While white evangelical voters were uneasy with Trump in the primaries, giving their strongest support to candidates with clearer conservative bona fides, rank-and-file evangelicals eventually found their way back to the familiar rut in the two-track road of American polarization.

Much can be said about this polarization, but I'll focus on just three revelations about 2016 white evangelical voters and about American religion and civic culture more generally.

The first revelation: polarization trumps Donald Trump. If I wanted to test the power of white evangelical polarization, I would nominate as a GOP standard bearer a twice-divorced casino owner with a reputation for philandering who only recently left the Democratic party and who thinks repentance isn't a big deal. So what did the 2016 test reveal? Not only that partisan polarization persists under those conditions, but also that partisanship has the potential to re-frame how partisans understand their basic convictions.

We need a politics that thrives when citizens have the capacity to deliberate with others across lines of real difference.

The persistence of polarization is not a difficult story to tell. Plotting the white evangelical vote over the last five presidential election cycles shows the line remaining largely flat. In that sense evangelicals are a case study: They increasingly the election was ordinary, so the story is as much about continuity as change. This leads me to believe that most of the surprise about the 81 percent vote for Trump was less about change and more about a candidate. The question seemed to be: How could white evangelicals vote for him? But that question assumes white evangelicals were voting primarily for a man, rather than

out of an identity. The idea of partisanship-asidentity suggests that we do not rationally weigh our ideological convictions and issue preferences

and then choose parties and candidates to suit. Instead, it is the reverse: We *start* with a set of attachments to political groups that become a prism through which we understand political choices.

A second revelation: polarization trumped evangelical elites. We heard a lot from and about Jerry Falwell, Jr. and like-minded folk in the election, to the point that it might seem that evangelical



Henry Institute Director Kevin den Dulk

leaders were in lockstep. But the fact is that the election exposed a lot of fracture and conflict among evangelical denominational leaders, parachurch executives, best-selling theologians, megachurch pastors, pundits, and media celebrities. The GOP standard-bearer was a lightning rod for a host of deep and long-standing disagreements among evangelical leaders about church-state relations and about appropriate responses to dramatically shifting perspectives on race, family, marriage, and other cultural concerns. If those elites were to hold sway over their constituents, we might expect elite differences to result in softer support for Trump. Yet mass support was strong. I'll leave speculations about why elites seemed to have little influence for another day.

Third, polarization trumps civil society. By civil society, I mean those voluntary associations and organizations that mediate between individuals and the state and provide a seedbed for good citizenship. Polarization is anothema to a healthy civil society, because the clustering of people only with others who share their views arrests the development of the civic skills and dispositions required for a strong pluralistic society. White form their strongest associations with the politically like-minded, even to the point that partisan attachments shape "non-political" choices like marriage and with whom they worship. The socalled "God gap" in American politics is not merely a description of how religion shapes our choices of candidates and parties. The direction of influence can also go the other way, with political identity

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A Tribute to Stephen V. Monsma

by Henry Institute Director Kevin R. den Dulk

Dr. Stephen V. Monsma, Senior Fellow at the Henry Institute, passed away on February 18, 2017. His role with us at the Institute capped a remarkable career of service in the academy and government, with Calvin College bookending that career

Steve taught at Calvin throughout the tumult of the late 1960s and early 1970s, before serving in both the Michigan House (1974-78) and Senate (1978-82). After some time in appointed positions with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Social Services, he returned to academics, teaching at Pepperdine from 1987 to 2004. Along the way, Steve served on the boards of Bread for the World and the Center for Public Justice, among other organizations. When I asked him a few years ago why he had left Malibu for a "retirement" in Grand Rapids, Steve responded without a hitch: "Because this is where you go to do good work in the Reformed tradition." He meant that, and indeed wrote much of his best work in his last decade.

Steve was a first-rate scholar who combined his experience in the nitty-gritty of policy-making and politics with a deeply biblical vision of public justice. He was especially concerned with how the government might partner with civil



Steve Monsma teaching a political science class at Calvin in the early 1970s.

society to advance the social welfare of the least advantaged. He often dealt with controversial issues, but he worked with a committed yet humane and generous spirit. He was disarming that way.

Steve's teaching and political career started in Grand Rapids. But it would not be quite accurate to say that he merely came out of the tradition of west-Michigan political activism that has often both



challenged and moderated ideological extremes. Rather, he helped build that tradition. That's probably illustrated in no better way than Steve's friendship and collaboration with Paul Henry, who was Steve's colleague as a Calvin political science professor and co-author, and then as a state legislator. They came from different parties—Steve a Democrat, Paul a Republican—and while they could each have a partisan edge, they didn't fall prey to encrusted partisan identity. They knew that far greater purposes were at stake than their party attachments. It is certainly easy to become wistful and wonder if their approach is possible today, but I often remind myself that they faced their own intense pressures and yet managed to break through with a distinctive Christian witness.

There is much more to say about Steve's public witness. But I think it is worth hearing his own words in the wake of Paul Henry's death in 1993, which reveals something about both of their aspirations:

In Paul's day and in ours there is much too much politics of the self-interested variety and much too little concern for justice. We have more than enough cheap, self-interested, egotistical politicians with inflated opinions of their own importance. They are still too much with us. Paul was one of those public servants who truly earned the appellation 'public servant' by diligently seeking to care for the weak and needy by promoting justice in our land....

What a fitting description of my friend Steve as well. \sim

Additional tributes to Dr. Monsma can be found at: https://calvin.edu/centers-institute/programs/institute-research-fellows/stephen-monsma-tributes

The Polarization of White Evangelicals

(continued from page 1)

shaping our lived experience of faith; this rising level of partisanship within evangelicalism is one of the reasons people are feeling pushed out of that faith tradition, which of course simply intensifies partisan identity among those who remain.

My greatest concern is that behind this polarization we see a kind of civic disengagement, which might seem a strange thing to say. We know that the strongest partisans are also the most likely to be voters. They participate—they're engaged—in that narrow sense. But in a broader sense, we need a politics that thrives when citizens have the capacity to deliberate with others across lines of real difference. And in that sense, we are facing profound challenges.

More about the election and evangelical voting:

MindPop, Episode 18: https://player.fm/series/mindpop

Trust and Civil Society: https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/5024/liberal-democracy-has-trust-issues/

The Disappearing God Gap: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-disappearing-god-gap-97801997347022

The Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics

The Henry Institute is a research and civic engagement center that focuses on the interplay of faith and public life. Founded at Calvin College in 1997, the Institute is dedicated to convening scholars and practitioners, encouraging high-quality research and public commentary, and fostering citizen involvement through public outreach and education.

We are inspired in our work by the life and legacy of educator and public servant

Paul B. Henry, who committed his life to seeking justice through his deeply held convictions and thoughtful practice. ~



Challenges for Next President Series Continued in Fall 2016

The Henry Institute's Challenges for the Next President series, funded by the *Calvin Faith and Citizenship Initiative*, continued during the 2016 fall semester, with panel discussions leading up to the November vote that tackled "hot topics" from the election. The goal was to encourage examination of various views, helping the audience to become more educated and thoughtful voters.

The Challenges series started in the spring of 2016, with panel discussions on the environment, immigration, criminal justice reform, and events surrounding the presidential primary elections. In the fall, Professor Micah Watson (from Calvin's Political Science Department) continued work with Henry Institute student research fellows Abbie Schutte and Jonathan Winkle, who prepared background papers on the panel topics, gathered web-based resources, and introduced the topic and speakers at each session. "My fascination with politics and public life has made my work on this project very rewarding," noted Schutte. "Having the opportunity to dig deeper into these public policy issues, and exploring various viewpoints and "sides" to the discussion has helped me to think comprehensively and expanded my awareness."

Three fall events took place prior to the election, with one final session the week after the voting was completed.



John Muyskens (left) of the Washington Post and Ryan Struyk of ABC News

Faithful Fact Checking: The first panel in September featured two recent Calvin graduates who work in journalism: Ryan Struyk from ABC News and John Muyskens from *The Washington Post*. The two discussed roles and responsibilities of the media, both during elections and as an ongoing "check and balance" in the political arena. They also considered how Christian citizenship relates to responsible engagement in politics. Muskyens talked about the *Post*'s Pinocchio fact-checking system. Struyk offered his perspective

on media neutrality and the duty of honest reporting. They also discussed the climate of "fake news," ways to discern truth in the media, and the need to step outside our own opinions and communities to hear and evaluate what the "other side" is saving.

Foreign Policy: In October, foreign policy considerations took center stage as Becca McBride and Joel Westra (Calvin College political science professors) were joined by Todd Huizinga (Henry



Becca McBride (left), Todd Huizinga, Joel Westra

Institute Research Fellow). The three panelists talked about the role the U.S. should play in the world today and whether our military forces should remain stationed throughout the globe. They also considered the potential shift in the focus of U.S. foreign policy from the Middle East to Asia, calls to become more isolationist, and the impact and importance of trade liberalization and global agreements. Comments were made about various "hot spots" around the globe, and the three offered their thoughts about the overall role that can and should be played by the U.S. in the world today.

The Economy: The week before the November election, members of the Calvin College Economics Department, including Adel Abadeer, Evert Van Der Heide, and Scott Vander Linde, took up a range of topics. Vander Linde considered ongoing health care expense increases, the truth about insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act, aspects of Obamacare that have been successful, and moral issues surrounding health care

that should be of concern to Christians. Abadeer talked about global economic concerns, including facts and fallacies about free trade agreements and their bearing on both citizens



Evert Van Der Heide (left), Scott Vander Linde, Adel Abadeer

and various aspects of the economy, impacts of regulating free trade, and how immigration effects the economy. Van Der Heide weighed in on the general health of the economy, whether a U.S. President has any control over increased numbers of domestic manufacturing jobs or the current pace and future of inflation, and concerns about economic growth in the U.S.

Post Mortem: The final session of the Challenges series took place as the dust from the election was still settling. Kevin den Dulk, Doug Koopman, Becca McBride, Mikael Pelz, Micah Watson, and Joel Westra from Calvin's Political Science Department led a post-mortem panel on a remarkable and to many surprising—election. The panelists talked about the concerns and attitudes of different groups in the country, the feelings of disillusionment, the negative campaigning, the separation of powers in our federal system of government, and some of the major issues that the President will be called to address during his term of office. [The event is available on Vimeo at https:// vimeo.com/channels/henryinstitute/227958306.]

As the series closed in November, Micah Watson noted, "This has been an excellent experience for me, for the students involved, and for all the audience members who faithfully attended the panels. We were thrilled to have between 75 and 125 people at every session, actively engaged in the discussion and asking thoughtful questions in considerate and open ways. The past election season was uniquely significant, with complex issues and widely divergent candidates. I'm pleased that we were able to provide an ongoing opportunity for civil discussion and considerate conversations."



Mikael Pelz (left), Kevin den Dulk, Becca McBride, Micah Watson, Doug Koopman

Diverse Group of Students Spend Semester in Washington D.C.

Since the spring of 2000, when Calvin College started its Semester in Washington D.C. program, more than 325 students have spent their spring semester living in the city as they explored potential career paths. The nineteen students who participated in the spring of 2017 were majoring in ten different areas: political science, international relations, psychology, social work, public health, philosophy, French, Spanish, Chinese, and German. The internship opportunities they pursued also varied widely, providing unique opportunities to experience real-life work situations, to consider their plans after graduating from Calvin, and to immerse themselves in the culture and life of the nation's capitol.



Emily Helder

Led by Professor Emily Helder (Calvin College Psychology Department) students took two classes, in addition to working four days each week at their internships. One course considered U.S.

mental health policy. It provided a broad overview and examined historical policies and current themes, access issues related to racial and socioeconomic disparity, and assessed changes and developments during **Hannah Timmermans** the initial months of the new Presidential administration.

The second course on Faith and Public Life, "introduced students to various groups and individuals from a range of perspectives who integrate their religious faith with some aspect of American public life," according to Helder. "The class encouraged students to move toward integration of their own religious views, and to extend those perspectives within the world of work, into their future vocations."

Students visited numerous organizations from across the religious and political spectrum, some obviously religious in their mission and others more secular. The groups also went to well-known national sites such as the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, the Pentagon, and heard oral arguments at the Supreme Court.

While the experiences are unique, the students' perspective about the value of the semester has a common thread. According to one: "This semester has helped me grow in my knowledge of policies and public life in America and my understanding of how our government functions. By meeting and speaking with politicians, everything in this area has become so much more real to me."

Helder noted, "Our group was extremely diverse in terms of a variety of factors including age, race/ethnicity, economic background, political affiliations, major, personality, place of residence. However, in our final reflecting time together, many students noted how much they appreciated the diversity and the friendships they had formed with people who were quite different from themselves."

Andrew Oppong

While at the Constitution Project (a nonprofit think tank dedicated to building bipartisan consensus on significant legal and constitutional



questions), I worked closely with attorneys heading the criminal justice program to research, draft and proof the Oklahoma Death Penalty Report. The final report—which was given to the governor and top state officials—argued for a continuation of the state-wide moratorium (at least until flaws in the state's death penalty system were examined) which has been in effect since 2015. The work definitely confirmed my plans to pursue a vocation in the field of law; it was also very fulfilling—my efforts could literally give another human being a chance at life. That knowledge made my Semester in Washington D.C. more than I could have hoped for and beyond memorable!



My time at The Lab School provided growth on a professional and educational level. I was able to learn about different fields of study (such as social work, teaching, speech pathology), while also connecting back to my psychology major. The most significant impact, however, was the amount of trust everyone gave me, including the teachers and kids I worked with. I left The Lab with a sense of confidence I never had before. I also discovered my passion for working with kids and will continue my study of learning differences in the psychological world. Due in part to my

experience at The Lab, I am now interning at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, working with testing and scoring ADHD and ADD. My time in D.C. has definitely opened opportunities for my future PhD in Clinical Counseling.

2017 Semester Participants

Ama Asamoah—Healthy Babies Project Nick Aukerman—Rep. Tim Walberg Esther Banninga—Lutheran Social Services Christine Hekman—U.S. Capitol Historical Society Eunice Kim—Court Services and Offender **Supervision Agency** Angela Kostelyk—German American Heritage Museum

Sarah Laninga—U.S. Committee for Refugees and **Immigrants**

Matt Leistra—American Prospect Magazine Marisol Nieves—Susan B. Anthony Foundation Andrew Oppong—The Constitution Project Ashley Poolman—Bright Beginnings

Calen Pos—Global Kids

Kagenza Rumongi—Africa Center for Strategic Studies Enrika Sinkeviciute—Collaborative Solutions for **Communities**

Ashley Zuverink—U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Jordan Smith—So Others Might Eat Hannah Timmermans—The Lab School Jake Verrips—Sasha Bruce Youthwork Nick Webster—Coalition for Community Schools

Henry Institute Funds Scholarships for D.C. Semester

Each year, through the generous support of Karen Henry Stokes and the Ron and Ann Kunnen family, the Henry Institute provides financial assistance to students for the Semester in Washington D.C. Program. Winners for the 2017 Semester included Christine Hekman and Ashley Zuverink, who were each awarded a \$2000 Henry Institute Scholarship, and Esther Banninga and Kagenza Rumongi, chosen to receive \$500 travel stipend assistance awards.

The scholarship application requires students to submit an essay responding to a comment by the late U.S. Representative Paul B. Henry, the Institute's namesake. In his book, *Politics for Evangelicals*, Henry noted, "Politics is the organized struggle for the ascendancy of one's own self-interest over that of another. Justice. on

the other hand, is the giving to every man his proper due."

In her application, Christine Hekman reflected on the connection between politics and justice, writing: "Politics is a struggle. But it is not inherently a fight for



Christine Hekman

an individual's own interests—it is also a fight for what a person deems right and just. It was through politics that slavery was ended, through politics that women gained the

right to vote, through politics that schools were desegregated... Politics are meant to be the means through which justice

is achieved.

"Are politics and justice synonymous? No. But are they antonyms? The answer is again, no. Politics do not need to be overcome in order to win justice for everyone. Rather, we must put aside our own selfishness, and harness politics in the service of our fellow humans... We must all reform our political goals in a way to advance the cause of those who cannot advance their own. We are called to seek justice."

Mikael Pelz, one of the Henry Institute board members who helped select the scholarship winners, noted: "This year's applicants wrote thoughtful essays which explored values that Paul Henry expressed in his work as a Christian and a politician. I was impressed with their evaluations of the role we are called to as Christians in public life."

Semester in Washington D.C. (continued from page 4)

Ashley Zuverink

While working at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops during the semester, one of my regular tasks was to create a one-page resource to be dispersed to their nationwide network on serving refugee minors who are married, helping to calm concerns regarding the matter, and providing best-practice advice on approaching these cases differently.

In general, working at the largest resettlement agency in the country during a busy political time was both challenging and fascinating. The executive orders and potential changes within the first months of this Presidential administration pushed me to be on my toes, but also confirmed for me personally that I want to continue working in the immigrant and refugee sector.





Nick Aukerman

While working in Congressman Tim Walberg's office, I most enjoyed providing constituent tours of the Capitol building. Providing the tours ensured an enriching education on American history and politics, and always led to brief encounters with members of Congress and sometimes even the White House.

I gave my first tour just days into my internship in February, and as spring break neared, tours became daily responsibilities. Every night, I searched for new facts that I could incorporate as a constituent guide, and each day, I learned something new. My understanding of American history and politics was greatly expanded. Even now, I sometimes find myself traversing between rooms across the marble foyer in my mind—a memory that I know will never cease to inspire me!



One of the most memorable experiences during my internship was the opportunity to interact closely with Dr. Joseph Siegle, the research director at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and an expert in the area of democratization in developing countries. We had a number of one-on-one discussions, including consideration of development and democracy in African countries and whether



democracy is the best system to foster development in post-conflict countries.

Dr. Siegle encouraged me to continue seeking knowledge and build my passion for participating in the politics of my country. I was humbled that such an experienced scholar would take time with me and answer the many questions I had about the interplay of politics, democracy and development.



Nick Webster

During my internship with the Institute for Educational Leadership on the Coalition for Community Schools team, one of my primarily tasks was to design website pages for the organization. As a psychology major, I became very interested over the course of the semester in the importance of trauma-informed care. When children are going through a traumatic incident, such as abuse or neglect, they are less likely to focus on things like school. The movement toward trauma-informed schools has been gaining traction in recent years, and I was able to create an overview and web resources for schools that are exploring becoming trauma-informed.

See the web page at: http://www.communityschools.org/multimedia/traumainformed_care_resources.aspx

Senator Ben Sasse Offers Annual Paul B. Henry Lecture

On April 28, Senator Ben Sasse offered the 20th annual Paul B. Henry Lecture. Henry Institute Director Kevin den Dulk provided the following introduction.

"The Henry Lecture honors the life and memory of Paul B. Henry. Tonight we also remember someone who shared in that legacy—Steve Monsma... With a nod to their

contributions, let me introduce our 2017 lecturer, Senator Ben Sasse from Nebraska. His straightforward commitments include the philosophy that politics is important, but not most important; that strong convictions don't have to result in partisan blood sport; that a healthy republic requires hard work on our civic knowledge and practices—all convictions that speak directly to our concerns at the Henry Institute."

The following remarks are condensed from Senator Sasse's lecture. The full lecture can be seen at https://livestream.com/ accounts/343472/events/7113187.

It is a privilege to be at this event tonight. I think Alexis de Tocqueville would recognize this Henry Lecture. Over the last 240 years, things just like this have been at the center of America, where we embrace lots and lots of civic engagement—but it's not first or primarily governmental. When Tocqueville came to America, he was essentially a travel reporter seeking to

"We need more people [in politics] who believe what George Washington believed that there is life after political service—a refusal to take permanent power. We should want every American adult to see themselves as a part-time politician because of their involvement."

define what America was. When he saw the economic dynamism of the country, he traveled to 18 of the states and wrote back to Europe: '... I have found the meaning of America—it is the Henry Institute.' While the Henry Institute didn't actually exist, he was saying, 'these Americans believe in this big middle sphere where people persuade other people about things. They generate ideas together in ways that show amazing love of neighbor and fundamental American innovation and commitment.' I agree with Tocqueville—I believe this Henry Lecture series is a significant piece of that.

Tonight, I'd like to talk about two things that motivate me lately regarding the past



and the future of America. First, I have teenaged children, and I am worried about the country they are growing up in. I think America is having a massive identity crisis.

Second, in the last year and a half, we

have been muddling through a crisis of doubt about shared facts, a crisis of belief about shared narratives, with narrative trumping facts for many people. I think there is great danger of being sucked into a way of viewing the moment and beginning to think: "we live in a unique moment, and the commitments that we share as a community of Americans aren't as important to me as having a strongman who will guarantee me security and comfort. Whatever shared pledges we have as civic republicans, that's not really my concern."

So as a framework for the consideration of our past and future, let me share thoughts about four "posts" and one "pre": post-fall, post-Guttenberg, post-Philadelphia, post-industrial, and pre-new Jerusalem.

Post-fall: Theologically, we should feel like pilgrims, dual-citizens, a little bit homeless, and with *lots* of doubt about our own moral certitudes. We have an entire

Scripture that shows us two stories: stories of forgetfulness and the need to set up memorials and remembrances of God—along with prophecy about the God who will come again. Over and over we see people who wanted to find certainty and hope in their own efforts; who wanted heaven, the Kingdom, and resolution to come *right now*.

While we are blessed to live in post-resurrection times, we are not so different from those Biblical people. We *constantly* want this to be done. We should see ourselves living in the moment we are in and trusting God for the future. Our tradition is about needing to learn to wait and to hope and to trust. It is critically important as we think of a Christian view of history—and especially when we get to

politics—that we remember we are east of Eden and pre-new Jerusalem.

All that is to say that politics can't be

ultimate. Politics is really important—it's an important way to love your neighbor. But we must limit how much of our identity is grounded in politics. We can—and we should—vigorously contest policies and outcomes, but it's not our ultimate identity.

Post Guttenberg: According to social scientists, New England adult culture in the 1730s-1770s was possibly the most literate population in history. The American founding arose when books became viruses and spread to the people, and ideas became printed tools to transform a population.

Literacy is on the decline in today's world. We are moving away from literacy and reading, and we are in danger of abandoning some of the mass literacy that made

...politics can't be ultimate. Politics is really important—it's an important way to love your neighbor. But we must limit how much of our identity is grounded in politics.

us who we are as a nation. Living post-Guttenberg created not just new books —it created ideas that would be pluralized, with mass interpretations to be contested.

Post-Philadelphia: We live in a nation that wrote the First Amendment because they believed freedom and rights came not from government, but from God. Government is a tool to secure rights, but the rights come from God. While the idea may have been brewing as far back as the Magna Carta, the American experiment at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia enshrined the idea that government gets its power from people, and we give it enumerated powers. The government doesn't get to define our rights—they are limitless because they come from God. Government is simply our method to secure them.

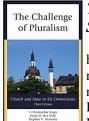
Post-Industrial: So what's going on now?

Why are we so anxious? It's because we don't know what comes next. We live at a unique moment in human economic history when we have moved from being hunter gatherers, to farmers, to the industrial age with urbanization, to where we are now. We have permanent uprootedness, permanent mobility, lack of communication, loss of neighborhood

and community—and there is no sign of coming change.



New Publications Page 7



The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Six Democracies

In the past decade, democracies throughout the world have struggled to address conflicts over the role of religion in their institutions and broader cultures. This new edition (co-authored by Chris Soper, Henry Director Kevin den Dulk, and Henry Fellow Steve Monsma) is a rigorous, systematic comparison of church

-state relations in the U.S., France, England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Australia. All six democracies share a commitment to protecting religious rights of citizens, but with substantially different approaches to resolving basic church-state questions. Historical roots of the differences and recent conflicts over Islam and other religious minorities are considered for each country. Additionally, the book assesses each state's efforts to protect the religious rights of citizens against the ideal of governmental neutrality and evenhandedness toward all. The authors argue that the U.S. concept of church-state separation is unique among political democracies, and that it discriminates against religious groups by denying religious organizations access to government services. They conclude that the U.S. can learn a great deal about promoting pluralism and the free exercise of religion from other Western nations.

The Democratic Theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer

In his recently published book, Henry Institute Research Fellow Darren Walhof examines the distinctive contribution the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer have made to democratic theory. Walhof argues that Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy enlarges our perspective by shifting the view away from individual citizens to instead



consider what exists between them, thereby allowing us to envision political realities that are otherwise difficult to see. These realities include disclosure of truth in democratic politics; achieving common ground in democratic dialogue, even amidst significant disagreement and diversity; the public and political nature of religious traditions that make claims on and shape citizens; and solidarities that connect us to each other and enable democratic action. He argues that this awareness enriches theories of democracy and is particularly crucial in an era of hyper-partisanship, accelerating inequality, and social conflicts involving racial, sexual, and religious identities. ~

Sasse at Paul Henry Lecture (continued from page 6)

Our jobs, which significantly define our identity, will continue to be shorter in duration forever more. We've lost our identity markers for providing value within our community, for providing security for our family. We are headed to a world of multi-career lives, of mid-career/mid-life reinvention.

America is in the midst of a giant crisis of loneliness. We've lost dense relational

community, and hollowing out of friend-

ship. A lot of people

are yearning for a city

that has foundations; a

anxious for someone

to claim 'I'm big, and

I'm strong, and I can

lot of people are

"Political disengagement is a much bigger problem [than polarization] that enables political polarization among the classes of people who are highly engaged in politics. We must re-energize broader civic engagement where more people understand involvement and are active in the process."

structures and the sense of solid community support. Across the nation, we have a whole need. We have a much bigger societal, bunch of people who have seen the hollow- cultural and generational crisis that we must ing out of work, hollowing out of local

But politics is never going to fill that seriously begin to think through together. ~

fix it all.

"We have to defend the right of speech and assembly and press and religion for people who are not in our communities and people who perhaps are saying things that we not only don't agree with, but that we may find repugnant.

"It is critically important for American Christians to look for opportunities to defend the rights of other minorities for speech, press, assembly and religion. (In Madisonian understanding) every American is supposed to think of ourself as a creedal minority. And the best way to make America work is for a whole bunch of minorities to come together with a whole bunch of other minorities and defend other minorities—until we have a framework for liberty. Then we can sit down over a feast and argue about really important things."

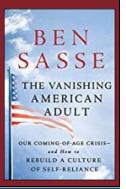
—from Henry lecture Q&A

Senator Sasse recently authored a book on the crisis facing America's young people. The Vanishing American Adult: Our Coming-of-Age Crisis—and How to Rebuild a Culture of Self-Reliance is currently available from Amazon or St. Martin's Press.

from the Henry Lecture:

"The decline of 'rights of passage' that defined the movement to adulthood

provided comfort to people because it gave them a basis to think through life. Without these experiences, we are missing something critical. I believe our American society has lost these guideposts and our children are suffering as a result."



2017-2018 Paul B. Henry Lecture —featuring Melissa Rogers,

formerly special assistant to President Obama and executive director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood **Partnerships**

> February 21, 2018 at 7:30 pm Calvin College Recital Hall

Henry Institute Sponsors Religion and Public Life Symposium

The Henry Institute sponsored the ninth biennial Henry Symposium on Religion and Public Life at the Prince Conference Center on the Calvin College campus at the close of April. The event provides opportunities to present current research, foster personal and professional networks and collaboration, learn about research opportunities related to the intersection of religion and public life, and discuss current issues.

The Symposium included twenty-eight different panels with 104 individuals presenting their research or participating in panel discussions. Topics ranged broadly, from American slavery in the 1800s to military intervention and the Church of England; from environmental politics to political attitudes of clergy in the U.S.; from a comparison of Martin Luther and Donald Trump to the politics

of Catholic priests in the U.S. and Ireland.

The program included several projects from the Institute's Civitas Lab (related article on page 10). The Visualizing Faith and Public Life project set up three interactive stations, encouraging individuals to use Ipad displays to explore photographs taken by Calvin students to express intersections of faith



Visualizing Faith and Public Life station

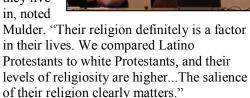
and public life. Abbie Schutte discussed her research work on the role of faith-based organizations in foster care programs. Isaac LaGrand and Calvin College history professor Kristin Kobes DuMez presented findings on Islamic fundamentalism and family values politics. Julie Bylsma participated in the Criminal Justice Reform panel, and also demonstrated her interactive software platform to identify community resources for recently released offenders in Kent County, Michigan.

Mark Mulder (Calvin sociology professor) and Erica Buursma presented research from their Civitas Lab-related ethnographic study of Protestant Latinos'

political views, demonstrating that the

churches of Protestant Latino populations are very diverse in terms of style and political values. "They clearly influence the

social, economic, and the political climate" of places they live in, noted



Several hundred participants attended sessions during the three-day event, taking in academic research, grappling with issues at the intersection of religion and public life, and interacting with individuals from around the United States, Canada, Brazil, China, the Netherlands, and the UK.

Roundtable discussions also made up a portion of the program on topics involving religious freedom and LGBT rights, criminal justice reform, the future of charitable choice, a Christian response to persuasion and polarization, and international relations from a faith perspective.

The event included three plenary events. Boston University's Charles Glenn, an education policy expert, presented the Center for Public Justice's <u>Kuyper Lecture</u> on Thursday evening. On Friday, Ben Sasse,

(the U.S. Republican Senator from Nebraska) delivered the annual Henry Lecture (related



Interactive software to identify community resources for recently released offenders

article on page 6), and a panel on Faith and the Democratic Party featured *Washington Post* journalist Sarah Pulliam Bailey, along with Michael Wear and Burns Strider, veterans of faith outreach on presidential

campaigns (see related article on page 9).

"The Symposium provides a unique opportunity to consider questions that political life raises, in particular about how we seek a just society that honors our religious faith

through political institutions and ideas,"

noted Kevin den Dulk, Director of the Institute. "This event brings together a wide range of people, inviting them to



share ideas about how our religious beliefs call us to service for good, to reform our world and humanity."

See the Program at: https://calvin.edu/centers-institutes/henry-institute/programs/symposium/

Some information for this article is from Calvin College Chimes article (5/5/17) by Kathryn Post, Renee Maring, and Josh Parks.



Religion and Private School Enrollment in the Era of School Choice

Do school choice policies really help private schools? Two Henry Institute researchers have been exploring that timely question for the past several years and find that the answer is complicated. In a forthcoming article in Politics and Religion, Mike Pelz and Kevin den Dulk examine the effects of religion on private school enrollments in the era of charter schools, vouchers, and tuition tax credits. Proliferation of school choice policies has expanded schooling options for parents, and while this trend coincides with a decline in private school enrollment, it is unclear how these policies impact participation among various religious traditions and religiosity.

Pelz and den Dulk studied the impact of religion and school choice initiatives on the decision to enroll in different types of private schools. Using state-level data, they explored motivations for choosing faith-based schools, such as transmission of religious identity versus a desire for secular goods (such as perceived superior educational levels). They found parental motivations to vary partly based on their exposure to policies that foster certain kinds of educational options. ~

Faith and the Democratic Party Discussed at Henry Symposium

Does the Democratic Party have a "religion problem"? That was the question for a lively plenary panel at the 2017 Henry Symposium. Moderated by Washington Post journalist Sarah Pulliam Bailey, and including Burns Strider and Michael Wear (veterans of Democratic Party faith outreach during past Presidential campaigns). the panel considered the 2017 election campaign and the future of the Democratic Party in reaching out to religious voters.

Pulliam Bailey: What happened with the Democrats and communities of faith in the 2017 election?

Strider: When the dust settles and there are 70.000 votes that you could have changed to win, anyone can look at the numbers and pick what they wanted to



Michael Wear (left), Sarah Pulliam-Bailey, Burns Strider

only confirmed Trump's message that he was the only one who cared about them. Pulliam Bailey: Let's spend some time

looking at the Democratic strategy going forward. How important is the issue of abortion within the how should it be handled by the party and by politicians?

Strider: If we want to

Democratic Party and

win the House of Representatives back, we have to speak to all Americans with a voice that's welcoming and affirming... Many Americans [are] feeling on the edges. We should consider the overall situation and base groups in the Democratic Party and how we reconcile that with other parts of the country that also need to feel welcome. I think it's wrong to say there's no place for pro-life in the Party—Nancy Pelosi had a pro-life caucus as part of her office.

Wear: If the Democratic Party keeps the abortion debate centered on whether it should be legal or illegal, the Democrats will usually win. But over the last several years, the Party has moved to making

The future of the Democratic Party will depend on third culture candidates...who are able to move in and out of different cultures in an authentic way.

Michael Wear

to an interview with Barack Obama, and I remember thinking at that time: "How can someone who is so open and so articulate about his faith not resonate with Evangelicals?" Sarah Pulliam Bailey blame. But I felt that the campaign did a

One of my first articles for Christianity Today was on

[faith and the Democratic Party]...leading eventually

poor job expressing who Clinton is to white Protestants. With a stronger faith outreach scenario to white voters, we possibly could have overcome those numbers.

Wear: The campaign brought [faith outreach director] John McCarthy on too late. He could have been an amazing asset, [but things were already so set when he arrived that] he could not impact the grassroots organizations.

Pulliam Bailey: Let's talk about specific strategies that Trump used, that Clinton could have considered—or started some of her own

Wear: Pressure was building in evangelical communities over the Obama years.

There are two ways to address the situation: relieve the pressure by proposing different policies that address concerns, or-as Trump did—stoke the pressure. Trump asserted that these are extraordinary times and we need to defend

Christians, and then portrayed himself as the only candidate who could help them find a way out. Clinton had opportunity to speak directly to these voters' concerns, to give a different vision of the political role of Christians in 21st century America. Instead, she was silent on the issue, which

federal funding of abortion and repeal of the Hyde Act part of the party platform. It's a completely symbolic effort—it's not going to happen because you can never pass a budget with that included. And putting that on the platform damaged the Party's chances and hurt our own agenda

and what we can accomplish for the future—because now we are on the defensive and battling to protect things that would have been a given if Hillary had won

Pulliam Bailey: There seems to be a long history of Democrats being comfortable with religion when they are dealing with people of color. But with white Christians there seems to be a disconnect. Should we assume white Christians are the staple of the Republican Party and write them off as our voters?

Strider: We certainly shouldn't take Evangelicals off the table—if we did that we'd never have had a Jimmy Carter or an Al Gore or a Bill Clinton.

The one thing we all need to think about inside the Party is labeling entire swaths of religious people as being the same. When we examine people and decide that if they go to church every Sunday then they're Republicans, but if they don't then maybe we have a shot at them—that's a bad assumption. You've also got to consider the culture: a Methodist living in Grenada, Mississippi is very different from a Methodist living in Boston. There are so many different ways to look at the country.

We've got to get people of faith back inside the Party and get [the Party's] attention again.

I think it's wrong to say there's no place for pro-life in the [Democratic] Party.

Burns Strider

Pulliam Bailey: I'm curious about whether there are religious people on the left who we should be watching as future

Wear: The Democratic Party right now is split into basically thirds: one-third white Christian; one-third non-white Christian; and one-third religiously unaffiliated and other faiths. Obama was largely able to paper over those differences, given his unique abilities. The future of the Democratic Party will depend on third culture candidates like Barack Obama who are able to move in and out of different cultures in an authentic way. And I think there's a lot of hope for that—I think we just need to usher in a new generation. ~

For much more, and to see the entire discussion: https:/vimeo.com/218808576

Student Research Fellows Participate in Henry Institute Civitas Lab

As part of the Henry Institute's ongoing efforts to explore the role of Christianity in public life, each year we support student research fellows as part of our Civitas Lab (formerly the Faith and Citizenship Lab). Calvin College professors mentor student researchers as they collaborate together on a scholarly project. Along the way, students gain a better understanding of both their research topic and the scholarly process, as well as enhancing valuable skills in writing and technology.

During the past year, nine student researchers worked on ten different projects, with funding from Calvin's Faith and Citizenship Initiative, the Henry Institute's Civic Education Fund, the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity, and the Mellema Program in Western American Studies. Each student works primarily in one area of research, with one professor, but the Civitas Lab brings the entire group together regularly to discuss their work, develop community, brainstorm ideas, share project insights, and sometimes divide labor.

"Over the past fourteen years, the Henry Institute has supported 67 student assistants, connecting them with opportunities to learn research processes in various disciplines while experiencing the caring mentorship of Calvin faculty," according to Institute Director Kevin den Dulk. "Our mission—to encourage scholarship and promote active public engagement—is clearly exemplified in our Civitas Lab and student research fellow program."

The fall of 2017 will bring new students into the Civitas Lab as research fellows to work on a GIS mapping project, continue exploring water and justice issues, and pursue other current topics.



Isaac La Grand
Senior
Major: History,
Philosophy
From: Grand Rapids, MI

Isaac spent his year in the Civitas Lab working with Calvin College history professor Kristin Du Mez as she continued her research on the religious faith and background of Hillary Clinton for a book she will be publishing on the topic. They also explored the interaction of Islamic fundamentalism and family values politics, presenting their research at the Symposium on Religion and Public Life.



Abbie Schutte
Senior
Major: Political Science
Minor: Sociology, Urban

Studies

From: Kansas City, MO



Major: Political Science From: Caledonia, MI



Abbie and Jonathan worked with Calvin political science professor Micah Watson on the Challenges for the Next President series (see page 3). Jonathan was also involved with Henry Institute Director Kevin den Dulk in his research on water and justice. Abbie initiated her own research project into church support for adoption and foster care, utilizing her work as the topic of her political science honors thesis and authoring a paper which she presented at the Institute's Symposium on Religion and Public Life.

Shiki Hino Senior

Major: Economics and Mathematics

From: Asago, Japan Shiki spent the summer

and academic year in the Civitas Lab with Becca McBride (political science professor) focusing on her ongoing work and research regarding global interaction in transnational adoption.

"The Civitas Lab and research with Dr. McBride were much needed opportunities for me," noted Shiki. "As a first generation college student, I wouldn't have known where to search for these challenging, yet rewarding academic experiences, and I am very grateful to the Institute."



Julie Bylsma
Senior
Major: Biology
From: Caledonia, MI
Julie spent her second year
in the Civitas Lab working

on the Returning Citizens and Restorative Justice project with Jason Van Horn (Geology, Geography and Environmental Studies). She graduated mid-year, but continued using specialized software to create an interactive map of community resources for re-entering Kent County citizens as they are released from incarceration. She presented her work at the Symposium on Religion and Public Life in the spring, participating on a criminal justice reform panel.



Kara Bilkert
Senior
Major: Sociology, Social
Work
From: Cleveland, OH

James Owens
Sophomore
Major: Sociology,
Studio Art
From: St. Louis, MO



Kara's second year in the Civitas Lab with Roman Williams from the Calvin Sociology Department was spent focusing on the Visualizing Faith and Citizenship Project. The work explored images of faithful citizenship through photos collected from Calvin students studying in off-campus programs. "Having the opportunity to explore ideas of faith and citizenship through the medium of photography with students who traveled abroad was an inherently unique research process," according to Kara. "It's curious to see how first year and senior Calvin students alike view faith and citizenship on an international platform." James joined their efforts during the year as well. The project was included as a public exhibit at the Henry Institute's Symposium on Religion and Public Life in the spring.

Two students are working with faculty this summer with Henry Institute funding: *Katherine Post* is examining issues around militant masculinity in evangelicalism with Kristin DuMez (History Department), largely focusing on trends from the 1970s through today. They are examining militant/patriarchal ideology in Christianity with instances of accepting, allowing, and in some cases perpetuating, abuse.

Isabelle Selles is working with Jeffrey Bouman and Andrew Haggerty of the Calvin Service-Learning Center to review relevant literature on how college affects students generally. They plan to develop a survey for Calvin alumni exploring whether student participation in service-learning activities while in college influences post-college civic and political expression.



Noah Schumerth Sophomore

Major: Geography and Architecture From: Appleton, WI

Noah mapped and researched

conflicts over public lands in the western United States, working with Professor James Skillen of the Geology, Geography and Environmental Studies Department.

"My work documenting violent incidents against public land agencies taught me how violence and intimidation can go untold or unseen, even in today's society," reports Noah. "The violent incidents, even against rangers and volunteers, served as a reminder of the need for God's love to preside over any political belief or debate."

Erica Buursma Junior

Major: Sociology Minor: Gender Studies, Spanish, Communications From: Grand Rapids, MI

Erica joined the Civitas Lab to work with sociology professor

Mark Mulder. They explored Latino congregations, including attitudes and
activities related to civic engagement, as part of Mulder's Latino Protestant
Congregations Project (funded by a Lilly Foundation grant) and utilized
interview transcripts to better understand Latino civic and social engagement.

Erica noted, "The Civitas Lab offered me a platform to explore my interests with a supportive mentor and understanding peers. I thoroughly appreciated talking through research difficulties and exploring new opportunities at the monthly meetings, but I most valued my experience presenting with Professor Mulder at the Henry Institute Symposium on Religion and Public Life, where I encountered research through academic eyes and fully enjoyed my time."



In 2016, Henry Institute Research Fellow Corwin Smidt received a \$25,000 grant from the Louisville Institute to continue his research on American Protestant clergy. Using survey data that covers more than twenty-five years, Smidt is examining the social characteristics, theological perspectives, political views, and levels of political activism of clergy in the United States.

American pastors occupy a unique position as leaders within religious and public circles as they work at the "grassroots" of American faith life, fostering and sustaining spiritual vitality in their congregations. Their collective efforts significantly shape the nature of religious concerns within American society.

Additionally, their authority as church leaders makes them uniquely influential in public affairs. Churches are key social institutions that shape the moral thinking and behavior of their members. As central figures within these moral communities, pastors play a significant role in the life of church members and possess a level of authority not typically enjoyed by other community leaders.

According to Smidt, the environment for clergy has changed dramatically over the past several decades. Religion has become a matter of personal choice for congregants. Rising educational levels and increased geographical mobility have weakened historic ties between social and ethnic group membership and religious

affiliations, with cultural assimilation further diminishing many differences earlier linked to custom and heritage.

Organizationally, religious matters have changed as well, with more parishioners embracing faith to attain subjective wellbeing and resolve personal problems rather than to understand theological truths or foster faithful living. A larger segment of American society today contends that moral convictions should remain a private matter, and there is growing polarization within American electoral activities. Social and political environments are changing, and there are challenges within church denominational structures as well as generational shifts within the composition of the clergy.

Smidt will compare the new 2017 survey information to earlier survey data (from 1989, 2001, 2009) to trace the impact of cultural change on American clergy. For those scholars who wish to use the data themselves, data files will be publicly available through the web-based American Religious Data Archive (ARDA).

Smidt's unique research uses survey responses from clergy in 10 Protestant denominations: five mainline (Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Presbyterian Church USA, Reformed Church in America, and United Methodist Church) and five evangelical denominations (Assemblies of God, Christian Reformed Church, Mennonite Church USA, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and Southern Baptist Convention).

Additional Reading on Clergy Attitudes & Activism

American Evangelicals Today
Written by Corwin E. Smidt
Published by Rowman and Littlefield in
2013

Pastors and Public Life: the Changing Face of American Protestant Clergy Written by Corwin E. Smidt Published by Oxford University Press in 2016

Pews, Prayers and Participation: Religion and Civic Responsibility in America

Written by Corwin E. Smidt, Kevin R. den Dulk, James Penning, Stephen Monsma, and Douglas Koopman Published by Georgetown University Press in 2008

Pulpit and Politics: Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium Edited by Corwin E. Smidt Published by Baylor University Press in 2004

Upcoming Pruis Rule of Law Lecture

Are International Institutions Dispensable?

—**featuring Rod Ludema**, Georgetown University [formerly U.S. Dept. of State; White House Office of Economic Advisors]

November 2, 2017 at 3:30 pm Meeter Center Lecture Hall

Henry Institute Research Fellow Activities

Over the past year, the Henry Institute has been pleased to sponsor the work of five senior research fellows.



Todd Huizinga published *W hat Europe Can Learn from Trump* (in German, from Vergangenheitsverlag, Berlin) and an article in *Christentum und politische Liberalität* entitled "Christian Faith and Politics in the Postmodern Age." He also presented "The EU and Global Governance" at the Calvin College January Series in 2017 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehY-I_z03MI] and spoke at the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan, for Hillsdale College, at the Henry Institute Symposium on Religion and Public Life, and in Belgium, Hungary, the Netherlands and Germany. He gave numerous radio, television and print interviews in the United States and abroad throughout the year.



Stephen V. Monsma published his final book, *The Challenge of Pluralism*: *Church and State in Six Democracies*, with J. Christopher Soper and Kevin R. den Dulk (Rowman and Littlefield). He also wrote "What is an Evangelical? And Does it Matter?" for the *Christian Scholars Review*, which was published in their Summer 2017 issue. Steve died in February after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer (related article on page 2).

Corwin E. Smidt published two articles: "The Continuing Distinctive Role of the Bible in American Lives: A Comparative Analysis" as part of *The Bible in American Life* (Philip Goff, Arthur Farnsley II & Peter Theusen, eds.), and "The Role of Religion in the 2016 American Presidential Election (in *Zeiutschriff fur Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik*). He also presented three papers at the Henry Institute Symposium on Religion and Public Life (one with Mikael Pelz and one with James Guth and Lyman Kellstedt). Smidt served as Past-President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, continued his ongoing research under a Louisville Institute grant surveying clergy in ten Protestant denominations (see page)



continued his ongoing research under a Louisville Institute grant surveying clergy in ten Protestant denominations (see page 11), and taught a class on "Analyzing Reform Proposals in the American Presidential Selection and Election Process" at Calvin College.



Darren Walhof published *The Democratic Theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (Palgrave Macmillan). Walhof also presented academic papers at the North American Society for Philosophical Hermeneutics in College Station, Texas; at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark; and at the Canadian Hermeneutic Institute in Calgary, Alberta. He served as a moderator of the Henry Institute Symposium on Religion and Public Life.

Henry Institute Co-sponsors Gary Haugen at January Series Lecture

On January 11, the Henry Institute cosponsored *Until All Are Free: a Look at Slavery Today and the Church's Invitation to End It*, a lecture by Gary Haugen, CEO and founder of International Justice Mission (IJM). The event was part of the Calvin College January Series, one of the leading lecture/cultural arts series in the country.

"Gary Haugen has dedicated his life to vulnerable people across the globe who live with violence and yearn for justice," noted Institute Director Kevin den Dulk in his introduction at the lecture. "His work as a human rights attorney and director of the U.N. investigation into the Rwandan genocide, along with other experiences, showed him the real costs of everyday violence, injustice, and violations of citizen's rights

"What gives me hope? That the creator of the universe is a God of justice." Gary Haugen

—as well as the opportunities to work through the justice system even when it is corrupt and complicit in violence —to restore and rescue victims. Since 1997,

IJM has used field officers, local advocates in policing and courts across the world to bring justice reforms and relief to people."

According to Haugen, God has placed us at a unique moment in history: he wants to use us to end slavery permanently. Fortysix million people are illegally held in slavery today—more than at any other time in history. Slavery is a \$150 billion business, with more profits than Coca Cola, Disney, General Electric, IBM, Chevron, Wells Fargo Bank and Exxon Mobile combined. Yet Haugen believes that while slavery is more prominent than ever, it is also more stoppable.

Every country has laws against slavery, but it persists simply because there is impunity. The laws are not enforced, and

> governments are not doing their God-given job to seek justice. But throughout history, as governments condone injustice, God has

given common everyday Christians the dignity of responsibility, sending them to governments to demand that the oppressed be allowed to go free.

"It is time to awake the slumbering giant of the church again," Haugen said. "On the whole, we are sleeping. Each of us is simply and lovingly called to wake up our



own churches—to join God in this great moment of ending slavery." IJM has called for September 24 to be Freedom Sunday (www.ijm.org/freedom-sunday), with people "around the globe asserting that enough is enough."

"Over 160 years ago, Frederick Douglas said, 'Let the people of God array their immense powers against slavery and slave holding and the whole system of crime and blood would be scattered to the winds." Haugen continued, "For the first time in history, that may be true in our time, but until it is, we just aren't going away until all are free."

See the lecture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=RaKe1SrVHek