

**Pulpit and Politics: Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium**  
Corwin Smidt, editor.

In the summer of 2000, the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics initiated a cooperative clergy study project that brought together a team of about twenty scholars which met together to hammer out a common survey instrument to be administered to clergy following the 2000 presidential election. Each team member was to engage in a study of clergy in the denomination of which they were a part, with the resulting data being shared with the whole team. As a result, over 8800 clergy across more than twenty different religious bodies were surveyed in conjunction with the cooperative study.

*Pulpit and Politics* is the initial volume from that study. Each chapter describes and analyzes clergy of one particular denomination or faith tradition, and each chapter employs the same structure, including the same five tables in examining responses to the same survey questions.

Six chapters address clergy from mainline Protestant denominations; nine chapters analyze clergy from evangelical Protestant denominations; two chapters focus on clergy from two black Protestant denominations, one chapter examines Roman Catholic priests, and another chapter details rabbis from different movements within Judaism.

The last chapter of the book offer critical analysis of the changes between 1989 and 2001 regarding approval for, and engagement in, clergy involvement in political among evangelical and mainline Protestant clergy. To summarize the most important findings on changes over time, social, theological and political categories are evaluated.

Socially:

The social composition of clergy is changing, as the relative numbers of women continue to expand within the ranks of Protestant clergy. Less dramatic, but also evident, is the growth of the proportion of ministers who are seminary graduates. Both changes move clergy toward a more liberal ideological and Democratic partisan direction.

Theologically:

Despite these social changes moving clergy in a more liberal and Democratic direction, there is nonetheless an increase in the level of theological orthodoxy within the ranks of both evangelical and mainline Protestant pastors over the past twelve years. In fact, the level of increased orthodoxy is about the same for both evangelical and mainline Protestant clergy. Males entering the ministry still outnumber females entering the ministry, and white males beginning ministry today are more theologically conservative than those white males who have served in the ministry for some years. These changes have moved clergy in a more conservative and Republican direction over the past twelve years.

Politically:

There has been a decline in the level of approval for almost all forms of clerical political activity among mainline Protestant clergy. Among evangelical Protestant clergy, there are similar declines in expressed levels of approval for clergy political action—but neither as consistently nor by such wide margins.

The differences between mainline and evangelical Protestant clergy in the approval ratings for the various political activities were neither as consistent nor as large in 2001 as those evident in 1989. Mainline Protestant clergy no longer consistently exceed evangelical Protestant clergy in their levels of approval for either church-based political activities or personal political activities.

More significantly, there has been a consistent drop in reported actual activity for all forms of political behavior between 1989 and 2001 among both evangelical and mainline Protestant clergy. This decline, however, is much more substantial among mainline than among evangelical Protestant clergy.

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Corwin Smidt, editor. Baylor University Press, 2004. ISBN: 1-932792-13-9.