



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

www.calvin.edu/henry ~~~~~ 616.526.6870 ~~~~~ email: henry@calvin.edu

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To what extent did the 2008 Presidential election reveal any major shift in the way in which religion serves to shape voting choices of the American electorate?

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**Summer
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The Disappearing ‘God Gap’ in American Politics

Following Bush’s re-election in 2004, much was made of the ‘God gap’ in American politics. In response, both the Democratic Party and Democratic presidential candidates sought to contest the perception that the Republican Party was the party of religious people while the Democratic Party was the party of secularists. And, during the 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama employed religious rhetoric as well as a religious strategy in seeking to win the nomination of his party. On the other hand, John McCain was more reticent to use religious language and focused more on social conservatives than on religious groups in his campaign effort. In the end, Obama easily defeated McCain to become the 44th President of the United States.

But did the election of Obama substantially change the God gap in American politics? Given the margin of victory, one might anticipate that it did. Moreover, the election seemingly was fought largely over economic, rather than social, issues which might further lead one to anticipate some substantial decline in religious cleavages in voting. Finally, following the election, little, if any, media attention was given to religious differences in

presidential voting—further suggesting religion’s possible irrelevance. To what extent, then, did the election reveal any major shift in the way in which religion serves to shape voting choices of the American electorate?

The Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics commissioned a national survey in April 2008, funded by the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, to assess religion’s role in fostering civic responsibility [see the Henry Institute newsletter for Summer 2008]. Following the 2008 presidential election, an effort was made to re-interview each of the 3002 original April respondents in order to ascertain their level of engagement in the 2008 presidential election and their decisions related to voting in the presidential campaign.

Despite the overwhelming victory of Barack Obama over John McCain in the 2008 election, the post-election survey revealed that religion continued to shape voting choices in two different ways.* First, important differences in voting choice based on patterns of religious tradition affiliation continued to prevail and can be seen when comparing, for example, the McCain vote among all evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, black Protestants, and the

religiously unaffiliated. Using these broad categories of religious tradition helps explain differences in presidential voting, revealing the continuing political importance of religious affiliation in shaping voter choices.

Second, systematic political differences also existed within the major religious traditions based on the division between religious traditionalists and modernists, regardless of their particular religious tradition. Traditionalists voted more heavily for McCain, while modernists across all faiths were the least supportive of McCain. This is a pattern which held true in 2004 and in 2008, although in the most recent election centrist mainline Protestants were slightly more likely to have voted for Obama than modernist mainline Protestants.

Thus, the basic patterns in religious voting found in the 2004 election continued to hold true in the 2008 election. While some religious groups exhibited double-digit changes in their pattern of partisan voting (namely, black Protestants, modernist evangelical Protestants, and centrist mainline Protestants), what is particularly striking is the relative similarity in levels of party voting found across the two elections. In other words,

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Disappearing 'God Gap' (continued from cover)

there was far more continuity than change in the patterns—and magnitude—of religious voting from Bush's victory in 2004 to Obama's in 2008. Thus, despite Obama's convincing victory, the results of the election reveal little evidence of any fundamental shift in the structure of faith-based voting.

When comparing the results of the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, one is further struck by the relative lack of swing constituencies—i.e., religious groups in which candidates won by small margins. There was much speculation during the campaign about whether Obama would attract a substantial increase in support among evangelical

Protestants, in part because his campaign and his progressive allies had targeted them and also because McCain struggled for their support. As was true with mainline Protestants and Catholics, Obama did best with the modernist segment of voters affiliated with the evangelical Protestant tradition. That said, the size of the modernist component of the evangelical Protestant tradition is much smaller than its traditionalist component (1.7 percent versus 14.8 percent—data not shown), resulting, in the end, in evangelical Protestants supporting McCain at virtually the same level they voted for Bush in 2004.

The closest division in the two

party vote occurred among mainline Protestants and non-Hispanic Catholics with 54 percent of mainliners casting their ballots for Obama, and 47 percent of non-Hispanic Catholics doing so. When evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, and Roman Catholics are examined overall in terms of religious traditionalism, only centrist Catholics exhibited a partisan division of less than 10 percentage points. All other religious groups examined reveal one candidate or the other capturing the votes of that religious community by more than 10 percentage points.

Clearly, the foundation of Obama's victory was the strong support he

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Presidential Vote in 2008 by Religious Tradition

Religious Tradition	Reported Vote					
	2004			2008		
	Bush	Kerry	Total	McCain	Obama	Total
Evangelical Protestants	77%	23	100%	76%	24	100%
<i>Traditionalists</i>	85%	15	100%	85%	15	100%
<i>Centrists</i>	66%	34	100%	67%	33	100%
<i>Modernists</i>	59%	41	100%	42%	58	100%
Mainline Protestants	51%	49	100%	46%	54	100%
<i>Traditionalists</i>	65%	35	100%	66%	34	100%
<i>Centrists</i>	51%	49	100%	39%	61	100%
<i>Modernists</i>	39%	61	100%	43%	57	100%
Hispanic Protestants	63%	37	100%	57%	43	100%
Black Protestants	17%	83	100%	7%	93	100%
Hispanic Catholics	31%	69	100%	31%	69	100%
Non-Hispanic Catholics	53%	47	100%	53%	47	100%
<i>Traditionalists</i>	79%	21	100%	71%	29	100%
<i>Centrists</i>	51%	49	100%	54%	46	100%
<i>Modernists</i>	33%	67	100%	37%	63	100%
Jews	27%	73	100%	29%	71	100%
Other Faiths	45%	55	100%	41%	59	100%
Unaffiliated	28%	72	100%	24%	76	100%

Sources: 2004: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics

2008: Henry Institute National Survey on Religion and Public Life

Disappearing 'God Gap' (continued from page 2)

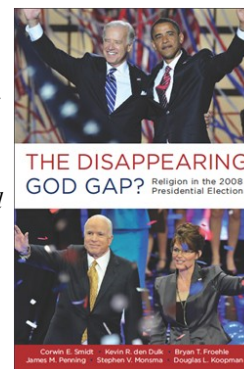
received from racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. Not surprisingly, he did very well among black Protestants—obtaining more than 90 percent of their votes—but Obama also drew strong support among Hispanic Catholics, Jews, and the religiously unaffiliated, securing 70 percent or more of their vote totals, and gained nearly three-fifths of the votes in the composite category of other religious faiths. McCain, on the other hand, did well among evangelical Protestants as a whole, but particularly so among traditionalists. Centrist evangelicals and Catholics, as well as Hispanic Protestants were also generally supportive of McCain while all other religious groups voted for Obama.

Overall, the post-election survey showed that much of the increased level of voting for Obama resulted

from a surge at the polls among Black Protestants and both Catholic and Protestant Hispanics (data not shown)—as whites for the first time in American history constituted less than 75 percent of the voters in the 2008 election. While the proportion of whites casting ballots is likely to continue to decline over the next several elections, it is also true that the high level of voter turnout among minority voters is not likely to be sustained in the 2012 presidential election—now that the first minority president has been elected to the highest office in the American political system. ~

*For a more detailed analysis of the role of religion in the 2008 presidential election, from its early days prior to the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary through Election Day itself, see the forthcoming book *The Disappearing God Gap? Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election*.

In January/February of 2010, *The Disappearing God Gap? Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election* will be released by Oxford University Press. The publication was authored by Henry Institute Director Corwin Smidt, along with Kevin den Dulk, Douglas Koopman, Bryan Froehle, James Penning, and Steven Monsma. The book offers a detailed analysis of the role of religion in the 2008 presidential election, including specific results from the Henry Institute National Survey on Religion and Public Life, which was conducted in April and again in November of 2008.



Available from: Oxford
University Press
www.oup.com
800/451-7556

Upcoming Henry Institute Lectures

Sept. 17 and 18, 2009

Mark Noll, Notre Dame University Francis A.

McAnaney Professor of History

September 17 at 3:30 p.m.

God and Race in American Politics

Willow Room at Prince Conference
Center

September 18 at 3:30 p.m.

*World Christianity and American
Christianity: What About the Future?*

Oak Room at Prince Conference Center



Sept. 30, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Tamrat Layne, former
Ethiopian Prime Minister
Gezon Auditorium at
Spoelhof Center



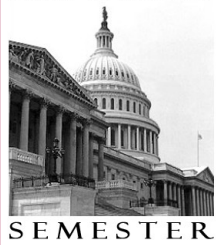
Oct. 7, 2009 at 3:30 p.m.

Corwin Smidt, Henry Institute Director

*The Disappearing God Gap? Religion in the 2008
Presidential Election*

Meeter Center Lecture Hall at Hekman Library Building





2009 Participants

- Pearlyn Budu
Embassy of Ghana
- Allie Gesink
*Edgewood/Brookland
Family Support
Collaborative*
- Paul Hartge
Sojourners
- Kari Holmgren
*National Criminal
Justice Association*
- Virginia Keehl
Sen. Debbie Stabenow
- Hannah Kett
*Institute for Global
Engagement*
- Ashley King
Justice Policy Institute
- Hilary Korzon
Laura Ingraham Show
- Renee LaCoss
*Lutheran Social
Services Foster Care
and Adoption Services*
- Meghan Mattern
*Africa Faith and Justice
Network*
- Zechariah Montoya
*International Center for
Not-For-Profit Law*
- Karen Paul
*International Justice
Mission*
- Alice Scogin
*Lutheran Social
Services Refugee
Resettlement*
- Jennifer Ziegler
So Others May Eat

Semester in Washington D.C. Program

From February through May 2009, 14 Calvin College students spent a semester in Washington D.C. working at internships and experiencing the city as part of the Paul B. Henry Semester. The Washington D.C. program was founded in 2000, and since its inception more than 125 students have gained first-hand work experience through internship placements, learning about the history and political workings of the nation's capitol, and absorbing the sites and culture of Washington D.C.

While many participants are political science or international relations majors, the program is open to students from all fields of study. Some of the semester students choose to intern on Capitol Hill in political offices, but many others work in communications, media, art, social work, law, health care, marketing, human rights, international development, embassies, and numerous other fields. The 2009 students reflected this diversity of interest and backgrounds, including students drawn from international development, political science, African studies, classical studies,

history, journalism, rhetoric, Latin, and social work.

The Semester in Washington D.C. differs from many of Calvin's other off campus semester programs in several ways. First, students spend the fall semester securing an internship placement by researching potential employers, writing and designing resumes and cover letters, and learning job interviewing skills to prepare for the spring semester off campus.

Second, while in Washington, each student works at their internship four days of the week and spends the fifth day visiting cultural sites and meeting with speakers from Washington D.C. as part of the "Integrating Faith and Public Life" course included in the semester.

Each year, a Calvin College professor accompanies the group, leading an evening class on current

public policy issues and incorporating academic learning into the hands-on experiences the students have in their daily work life. The 2009 Semester



was led by Prof. Steve Monsma of the Paul Henry Institute who taught *Public Policy Making and the New President* as the semester-long class.

According to Monsma, "This program is a great learning experience for our students that I do not think could be duplicated any other way. With the internship experience itself at the heart of the program, it is my belief that internships in students' fields of interest can play a vital role in their undergraduate experience." ~

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

The Henry Institute was created in 1997 to continue the work of its namesake—educator and public servant Paul B. Henry, who was committed to serious reflection on the interplay between Christianity and public life. The Institute seeks to be a non-partisan forum for research and information on the relationship between Christianity and politics. To that end, it provides resources for scholarship, disseminates scholarly work, and trains future scholars and practitioners.

616.526.6870 ~ henry@calvin.edu ~ www.calvin.edu/henry
1810 E. Beltline SE ~ Grand Rapids, Michigan ~ 49546

Fifth Religion and Politics Symposium Held

The spring of 2009 once again found scholars sharing their research on the interaction between religion and politics at the 5th Paul Henry Institute Symposium on Religion and Politics. The event was held from April 23-25 at Calvin's Prince Conference Center, and featured 19 different panel sessions, with 54 papers written by 66 authors. Each author presented their research findings and conclusions at their scheduled session, with time for audience discussion and questions.

The Symposium, which is normally held every other year, was sponsored in both 2008 and 2009 in order to alternate its biennial schedule with numerous other events related to the field of religion and politics. Since it had been sponsored last spring as well, the number of participants was somewhat lower than at previous events, but the content and ongoing discussions remained lively and worthwhile.



As has been true at past Symposi- ums, wide ranging interests, topics, and religious backgrounds were represented. Sessions included per- spectives from the Islamist, Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist faiths. Papers addressed a diverse range of topics: religion and American elections; Christianity in Russia, China, France, and Turkey; gay rights and marriage; Irish Catholic dissension; religious identification and beliefs within the military; Pentecostal community involvement; African church partnerships in fighting HIV/AIDS;



and various studies of the political perspectives of religious scholars, theologians, and leaders.

Many attendees commented on the value of the event and their plans to participate in future scheduled Henry Institute conferences. "The Symposium was very well organized and presented great diversity of both academic topics and the institutions represented!" noted one individual.

Another reported: "The panels and presentations were excellent, and I particularly appreciated the opportunity to socialize and discuss ideas with others who are interested in this field." A third stated, "I look forward to this event each time it is held, and can't wait to participate again in two years!"

The next Symposium on Religion and Politics will be held April 21-23 in 2011. ~

www.calvin.edu/henry/schedule/symposium/2009sympm.html

Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics Published

Religion is, and has always been, a powerful force in American politics. Over the past three decades, the study of religion and politics has gone from being ignored by the scholarly community to becoming a major force of research. Yet because this important research is not easily accessible to non-specialists, much of the analysis seen in the media regarding religion's role in the political arena is greatly oversimplified.

The *Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics* bridges the information gap by examining the considerable research conducted up to this point and assessing what has been learned, what remains unsettled due to conflicting research findings, and what important questions remain largely unaddressed by current research endeavors. Its chapters, written by noted scholars in specialized fields, summarize the latest views on

particular topics, important findings, insights, and theoretical advances; outline current debates in scholarship; and raise important but understudied questions. Topics cover the full range of America's history, from its founding to the present day, and plumb the depths of every aspect of the nation's politics, from voting patterns and social movements to the role of clergy in political activism and the influence of religion in all three branches of government.

The *Handbook* is unique in the breadth and detail with which it explores the fascinating and multifaceted relationship between religion and American politics. Scholars, students, journalists, and curious readers alike will find this book to be an indispensable source of information on the topic.

The *Handbook* was edited by Henry Institute Director Corwin E. Smidt,

with Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James L. Guth. ~

Contributors:
Harold F. Bass,
Marie A.
Eisenstein,
Gregory
Fortelny, James
G. Gimple,
James L. Guth,
Allen Hertzke,
Ted G. Jelen,
Lyman A.
Kellstedt,
Douglas L.
Koopman,
Geoffrey C.

Layman, David C. Leege, Michael Lienesch, John Michael McTague, Mark A. Noll, Elizabeth A. Oldmixon, Laura R. Olson, Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, Mark J. Rozell, Corwin E. Smidt, Robert P. Swierenga, C. Danielle Vinson, Paul J. Wahlbeck, Kenneth D. Wald, Peter W. Wielhouwer, Clyde Wilcox, J. Matthew Wilson



Available from: Oxford University Press
www.oup.com, 800/451-7556

Undergraduate Research Fellow Grants Awarded

Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, the Paul Henry Institute began awarding grants to Calvin College professors to encourage faculty research endeavors focusing on Christian faith and public life as well as to enhance undergraduate mentoring in scholarly research. These grants provide financial payment to a Calvin student selected by the professor for assistance in an approved research project, with the student actively involved in research and project tasks. For the 2009-2010 academic year, the Governing Board of the Henry Institute awarded five Undergraduate Research Fellow Awards. The following proposals submitted by Calvin faculty were approved for funding:

Dr. Gail Zandee

(Nursing) will work with a Calvin nursing student (who has not yet been selected) to explore local disparities in health care within three underserved Grand Rapids neighborhoods. The project will examine methods to address the identified problem issues within the community, and evaluate the role of the Christian nurse in addressing health care disparities.

Dr. Amy Patterson

(Political Science & International Relations), will continue her examination of the role of African churches in advocating on HIV/AIDS, with the assistance of student **Michelle Fraser**. They will explore political activities of churches, such as publicizing AIDS statements, encouraging public discussion about government policies, and direct participation by leaders and parishioners in lobbying efforts.

Dr. Bruce Bergland

(History) is continuing his research for a book regarding religious and cultural history, focusing on the intersection of the arts, philosophy and Christian faith in turn-of-the-century and interwar Prague, especially focusing on architect Joze Plecnik. He will be mentoring **Amy Surbatovich** who is proficient in reading original documents and completing research in the native language of Serbo-Croatian.

Dr. Steven McMullen

(Economics) will conduct research into the relationship between church attendance and crime in the United States between 1970 and 1990, using national crime data by state, along with General Social Survey church participation information. Student **Andrew Warren** will be involved in the research processes, empirical methods, and academic writing of the project.

Dr. Jamie Skillen

(Geology, Geography & Environmental Studies) and student **Rachel Stehouwer** will examine the role played by religious values and arguments in the political debate surrounding the Interior Columbia River Ecosystem case study. The information gained will be included in a book Skillen is currently writing entitled *Ecosystem Management: The Ecology and Politics of Flux*.

Henry Institute Conducts Third Clergy Study

The Cooperative Clergy Research Project of 2009 is being initiated and coordinated through the efforts of the Henry Institute. The project builds upon a similar research effort conducted in 2001 which focused on the role of clergy in American public life. The research is conducted through cooperative efforts among scholars from various religious denominations, though the actual surveying and data analysis is to be largely completed by Calvin's Center for Social Research.

Random samples of clergy from 10 denominations have been drawn: half are linked to mainline Protestantism and the other half to evangelical Protestantism. Ministers from these denominations received a similar survey in 2001, and pastors from 7 of the denominations were asked many of the same questions in 1989. These surveys will serve as the basis for a

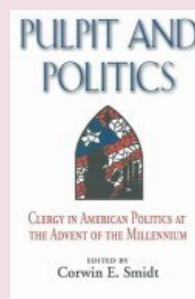
study which will focus on change and continuity across the denominations over time—in terms of the theological orientations, the political perspectives, and the political activity of their clergy—as well as evaluating whether the relationships which were established between theological orientations and political perspectives/political activities in 1989 continue to hold true in 2009.

The 10 denominations included in the 2009 Project are: the Assemblies of God; the Christian Reformed Church in North America; the Disciples of Christ; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod; the Mennonites; the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.; the Southern Baptist Convention; the Reformed Church in America; and the United Methodist Church. ~

The results of the 2001 cooperative clergy research effort were compiled and reported in the 2004 volume entitled *Pulpit and Politics: Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium*, which was published by Baylor University Press. The book examined and compared the role of clergy in American politics across 21

denominations and religious faiths, including evangelical, mainline and black Protestant churches, as well as the Roman Catholic and Jewish traditions. ~

Available from: Baylor University Press
www.baylorpress.com, 800/229-5678



Graduate Workshop on Survey Research and American Religion

From June 11 through 17, sixteen graduate students attended the Henry Institute's 6th Workshop on Survey Research and American Religion, exploring survey procedures and existing data and learning methods for correlating religious and political beliefs and behaviors. The participants originated from various institutions around the country and were competitively selected from different fields of study.

The Workshop—which has alternated between a biennial and annual schedule—is led by Henry Institute Director Corwin Smidt, Furman University Political Science Professor James Guth, and Wheaton College Political Science Professor Lyman Kellstedt (emeriti). During the week, the group intensively examines different theoretical and methodological methods, spending about ten hours each day working individually and in teams,

using computer lab facilities as well as class and group discussions.

During the most recent Workshop, Gregory Smith of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life attended several of the



sessions. Smith provided databases and information from the renowned research organization, which the students utilized along with datasets compiled over past years by Smidt, Guth and Kellstedt in their studies with others in the field.

The unique value of the Workshop is echoed by participants each year, including those in the 2009 program. One remarked: “This Workshop provided great interaction with senior scholars and excellent

opportunity to connect with other graduate students who have similar interests in a relaxed and humorous environment without the loss of serious engagement in scholarship.” Another noted: “The

Workshop was a tremendous help for me as I sought deeper knowledge of connections between religion and politics. In addition, it represented an often-neglected examination of measurement issues in political science.” A third stated: “All of the Workshop leaders made mention of several areas [of research] in desperate need of exploration, and it has challenged me to not fear moving into these areas.”

The next Workshop is tentatively scheduled for June 3-9 in 2010. Additional information is available at the Henry Institute website. ~

www.calvin.edu/henry/schedule/gradstudwkshp/2010/announce.pdf

2009 Workshop Participants

Joshua Ambrosius
University of Louisville
David Buckley
Georgetown University
J. Bryan Cole
Ohio State University
Jong Hung Jung
University of Southern California
Benjamin Knoll
University of Iowa
Aprifaye Manalang
Bowling Green State University
Michael McFarland
University of Texas
Ellen Moore
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign
Ashley Palmer-Boyes
Baylor University
Cassady Pitt
Wayne State University
Jeremy Rhodes
Baylor University
William Samson
University of Kentucky
Dominik Stecula
Piast Institute
Kasey Swanke
University of Notre Dame
A. Joseph West
University of Arizona
Jason Wollschlegler
University of Washington

Religious Tolerance — Love Your Neighbor

Dean Koldenhoven, former mayor of Palos Heights, Illinois, delivered the 12th annual Paul B. Henry Lecture on March 31, 2008. The annual lecture seeks to be non-partisan in nature, focusing on how our particular Christian beliefs and values should shape the way in which we engage in political life. In past years, prominent national figures have delivered these

addresses, including individuals who have served in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. This lecture was the first time a mayor had been invited to deliver the address—and, for that matter, a mayor who had served only one term in office. Nevertheless, despite the seemingly lower experience and stature of the speaker, the event



marked the first time the Annual Henry Lecture had featured a speaker who had been a recipient of the

Profile in Courage Award, which Koldenhoven received in 2002 alongside then Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan. Koldenhoven's political courage was put to the test when, during his term as mayor of Palos Heights, a controversy erupted over the possibility of selling a local church to Muslims.

Prior to being elected

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The Great Awakening: Reviving Faith and Politics in a Post-Religious Right America

Jim Wallis, President and Executive Director of Sojourners, spoke to a Calvin College audience on September 17, 2008, combining thoughts drawn from his latest book and observations related to the 2008 presidential election. He noted that, in the past, the failure of the political system to work at resolving the biggest moral issues of the day has led to social movements which address those issues, and the best social movements have always had religious foundations. When faith comes alive in these “Great Awakenings,” big issues such as the practice of slavery or child labor can be changed.

Wallis contended that the world today—especially the younger generation—is hungry for two things: spirituality and social justice. He noted that, in the 2004 presidential election, “religious issues” centered primarily on gay marriage and abortion, but that such issues have now expanded to encompass much more—including poverty, HIV/AIDS, creation care, the war in Iraq, and human trafficking.

Wallis also stated that three billion

people currently live on less than \$2 a day, that climate change is proceeding at rates never imagined, that diseases are ravaging entire continents, and that cycles of war, violence and terrorism continue to grow. Noting that Christians are called to confront these enormous issues, he challenged the audience to have faith that is strong enough to change neighborhoods, countries, and the world, and to manifest that faith through personal commitment and action.

Wallis called for political change that is not partisan in nature. While churches and religious organizations can, and should, help people, they are only able to instigate change to a point. As a result, public policy must support and further such change. Since all public policy reflects choices about the common good—particularly in terms of how and where money is spent—those choices are definite moral choices.

As Wallis looked ahead to the 2008 presidential election, he told the audience that the Kingdom of God

would not be on the ballot in November of 2008 but that decisions which would dramatically impact the common good were. Americans should

make the election be about issues rather than personalities. With the financial system in a state of collapse due to a culture that extols greed and personal property over societal good, with abortions continuing, along with global warming, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and nuclear proliferation, people of faith need to become more prophetic than partisan. Wallis called for a Great Awakening to address the problems facing our world and noted that the pressure to do so must come from movements that have arisen from a personal commitment to faith and justice. ~



Religious Tolerance (continued from page 7)

mayor, Koldenhoven had little political experience. As a teenager and young adult, he participated in get-out-the-vote campaigns and literature drives, but had spent almost his entire professional adult life working in the brick business. Prior to becoming mayor, Koldenhoven served as zoning commissioner (a volunteer position) for eight years but had no intention of running for public office. His plans changed when the city aldermen seemed intent on installing a puppet mayor whom they could easily manipulate; Koldenhoven put his name on the ballot and won the election.

During the 3rd year of his first term as mayor (the year 2000), the Al Salaam Mosque Foundation declared their intention to purchase a church building in the city which had been on

the market for more than two years.

The church had previously approached the city about purchasing the building, but the city had declined because the property was deemed too expensive and would require significant renovations.

The idea of Muslims worshipping in Palos Heights upset some of its residents. As a result, more than 100 individuals attended the next city council meeting. At the meeting, Koldenhoven was appalled as both residents and aldermen made insensitive comments about Islam and Muslims. City residents asked the council to purchase the building for use as recreational space. Several aldermen made a motion to invoke eminent domain. When the motion failed at the meeting, activists

subsequently collected more than 1700 signatures in support of invoking eminent domain on the property.

At the next city council meeting, aldermen passed a motion to purchase the church for \$2.1 million and included a \$200,000 payment directly to the Al Salaam Mosque Foundation as an incentive to terminate the group's efforts to purchase the property. Koldenhoven saw this as blatant hypocrisy and an “insult and embarrassment” to the Muslim community. He vetoed the proposal, basing the decision on his understanding of the establishment clause regarding the separation of church and state, the proper domain of governmental action, and his

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Two Kingdoms: Why Political Action Cannot Save America

Syndicated columnist and author Cal Thomas shared his views about the proper role of the church of Jesus Christ in a fallen world, particularly in relationship to politics, when he spoke at Calvin College in March of 2009. He noted that, over the past several decades, Christians have been trying to produce righteous behavior through political action and public law. However, religious groups which dedicate themselves to political action inherently assume that unsaved people can be forced to embrace righteousness and accept laws based on such principles through political means. But Thomas asserted that history has not shown this to be true: moral bondage to sin continues to fill the news; the immoral behavior of politicians of both parties has continued, if not grown, over the same period of time, and at the same time, religiously-based organizations such as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition have failed to accomplish their goals.

Thomas called Christians to return to a true and basic faith that rests on biblical promises and the Bible as

God's word. While human beings tend to insist that good and evil are relative, the Bible teaches that the judgment of good and evil is not man's decision but a judgment reserved solely for God. Moreover, since absolute goodness exists only in God, mere external reform will never make unbelievers capable of doing good; only redemption and the Holy Spirit can turn man from the idols of the world.

Thomas followed that, consequently, not only is seeking to impose moral values through political means absurd, it is also an affront to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. When Christians focus on political



action, evangelism becomes secondary. It is not the Christian's responsibility to convince sinners of their need to embrace a moral code, but rather to urge sinners to humbly receive the righteousness of God. Adding new laws and enforcing old ones will not make sinners morally responsible—only changing hearts and minds will do so, and such change can only come from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not politics.

Thomas contended that in calling Christians away from political engagement, he was not denying the legitimate role of government since God had ordained government. Still, while political engagement cannot change our culture, Christians should not simply give up—instead, they should exhibit a renewed belief that sinners can be transformed and that believers can impact the society around them by sharing what they are for (the Kingdom of God) rather than what they are against.

Thomas concluded by paraphrasing some thoughts from Ed Dobson (his former colleague and a co-author): You can be a Republican or Democrat, but if you die without Jesus, you are lost. You can be African American or white, male or female, but if you die without Jesus, you are lost. You can create the most perfect country on earth, but if you die without Jesus, you are lost. It is time to stop behaving as if we can change society without faith. ~

To order a copy of this lecture, contact the Calvin Campus Store and request Item V15198. www.store.calvin.edu

Religious Tolerance *(continued from page 8)*

commitment to Christ's command to love our neighbor. Through the upcoming months, Koldenhoven stood firmly on his decision, though ultimately, the Al Salaam Mosque Foundation decided not to purchase the property.

The fallout from the conflict likely played a large role in derailing his re-election to a second term as mayor, yet Koldenhoven does not regret his handling of the conflict. In 2002, Dean Koldenhoven was awarded the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. When presenting the honor, Caroline Kennedy remarked: "President Kennedy felt his greatest admiration for those in politics who had the courage to make decisions without fear of the consequences. It is this unique kind of courage for which we honor ... Dean Koldenhoven."

In the years since the controversy, Koldenhoven has actively participated in inter-religious dialogue efforts and in public diplomacy projects for the U.S. Department of State. Diplomatic efforts have taken him to Russia and the Ukraine, where he facilitated a burgeoning dialogue between Orthodox and Baptist Christians who were experiencing inter-communal tensions. Koldenhoven firmly believes that dialogue is the best approach to conflict resolution, providing the opportunity to build new relationships and help individuals identify common goals and values, learning how to live together. ~

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No Final Victories, No Final Defeats: Doing Our Duty While Living in Exile

Michael Cromartie, prior Chair and current Vice Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, delivered the 13th annual Paul B. Henry Lecture at Calvin College on April 14, 2009. Having worked in Washington, D.C. for more than 30 years, Cromartie noted that supporters of each new administration have high expectations of what will be accomplished at the beginning of each term only in the end to express disappointment between what they hoped to achieve and what was actually completed. With each new administration, supporters seemed to anticipate that the Kingdom of God was coming in on Air Force One—and then, in the end, are surprised that it didn't happen.

Cromartie stated that Christians need to revisit the Augustinian view of the Kingdom of God: “now, but not yet.” The Kingdom of God has entered this age, but it cannot be fully realized in this era. Thus, while it is critical for Christians to be actively involved in the political process, fulfilling their call to work at redeeming God's created world, it is imperative that they recognize they will never fully achieve that goal. Though never able to fully establish the Kingdom of God on earth, Christians are still called to work for justice, including utilizing efforts that involve political means.

Cromartie related this Augustinian perspective to the work of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. In 1948, after World War II, most nations of the world signed the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that all human beings possess inherent dignity and should be treated equally. The declaration called for freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Nevertheless, for many years, the issue of religious freedom remained a matter of little concern for most

nations and foreign policy experts. Gradually, however, various faith-based movements concerned about religious freedom began to bring the plight of the persecuted forward. In the early 1990's increased attention in the mainstream press and at the United States Department of State brought renewed interest to the problem, with formal diplomatic appeals for religious freedom.

In 1998, the U.S. Congress passed the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), making the issues of religion and freedom of conscience an integral part of United States foreign policy. IRFA was one of the most sweeping human rights statutes on record.

According to Cromartie, religious freedom is under renewed and increasing assault in the world, with nearly half of the world's population living in areas where religious freedom is restricted by government action or inaction. The goal of IRFA is to make promotion of religious freedom a primary goal of American foreign policy, thereby limiting not only egregious violations of religious freedom but the wide scale atrocities which frequently follow or accompany such limitations (including political imprisonment, disappearances, torture, persecution, and even genocide) as well.

The Commission on International Religious Freedom is concerned with religious freedom around the world for all people and all religions. It is an independent entity comprised of nine



private citizens appointed by the U.S. President and the minority and majority leaders of Congress. The Commission members travel around the world to research reports of religious persecution and lack of freedom, making public statements and producing policy reports based on their findings, recommending action for United States foreign policy, and holding U.S. policy makers accountable. The Commission's primarily role is to investigate abuses and make recommendations about whether particular countries should be labeled Countries of Particular Concern (CPC's) for demonstrating egregious, ongoing systematic abuses of religious rights and freedom.

Cromartie asserted that U.S. international interests, American foreign policy, and global security are inextricably linked to international religious freedom. Religious freedom forms a universal foundation for human rights and is applicable to all individuals and countries and is clearly linked to the promotion of other fundamental human rights. Governments that protect religious freedom are more likely to protect other human rights as well, and there are clear ties between massive human rights abuses and political instability, and between persecution and genocide. Nations are more secure when the countries around them stop persecuting, jailing, and killing their own citizens, since the results of such actions frequently spill across borders. By speaking out for those who suffer for their religious beliefs abroad, the U.S. affirms its own Constitution, and Christians affirm the command of Scripture to remember “the least of these.”

Cromartie shared several lessons learned by the Commission in its efforts to expose religious persecution around the world. First, working for political change and social justice often requires the patience of Job.

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No Final Victories, No Final Defeats

(continued from Page 10)

Politics takes patience and perspective, prudent and principled compromise, and persistence. He noted that politics is the art of the possible, not the reign of the saints. Cromartie noted a lesson he learned from Paul Henry—one drawn from Reinhold Niebuhr: “Politics is the method of finding proximate solutions to basically insoluble problems.”

The second lesson is that, in order to maintain sanity and emotional stability in the face of the horrors that exist, there must be an affirmation of our duties and higher calling in the City of God which is to come: while living in the City of Man with obligations and responsibilities, the Christian’s true home is the City of God. This dual citizenship leaves the faithful with a responsibility to strive to approximate justice in spite of the surroundings, always caught between what is fervently desired and the real world possibilities. Christians must be realists but not cynics, and they must ensure that divisions and disagreements can be channeled and controlled in fruitful ways.

“There should be no outrage when

politics turns out to be less amenable to our expectations than we had imagined,” Cromartie noted. “The will to strive for justice and work together with others will create a chastened view of politics, but not a totally denuded one. Some become disillusioned and so chastened that they say politics is not important, but I totally disagree.”

In conclusion, Cromartie quoted Jeremiah 29:7 and then returned to his Augustinian perspective. “We live in exile,” Jeremiah exhorted. “Seek the peace and prosperity of the city where you live in exile. If it prospers, you too will prosper.” Cromartie continued: “While we are living between two cities, there will be no final victories, but no final defeats either. We are still in exile and fall short of the Kingdom of God, but we are called to be wise, faithful, loving, just, and as prudent as possible. We must work for justice, be patient and carry out our duties faithfully, even while living in exile.” ~

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2008-2009 Henry Institute Lectures

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Henry Institute sponsored a number of public lectures:

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*Through a Glass Darkly: Politics and the Problem of Knowledge in Calvin’s Thought* by Matthew Sitman, PhD Candidate from Georgetown University, given on October 14, 2008

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Thinking Christianly—Voting Secularly? How to Vote in November (2028) by Jonathan Chaplin, Director of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics, given on October 27, 2008

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*¿Con Qué Derecho? Dominicans, Maya and the Advent of Human Rights* by Rob Cahill, Co-director of Proeval Raxmu, given on October 23, 2008

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Why Do They Hate Us? by David Long, Retired Foreign Service Officer and Retired Chief of Counter-Terrorism Intelligence for the Middle East with the United States Department of State, given on November 12, 2008

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*The Papal Revolution, Conscience and the Rule of Law* by Bruce Frohnen, Associate Professor from Ohio Northern University College of Law, given on November 13, 2008

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Preview of Fall Activities of the Henry Institute Director

Religion and Election Day: Voting Patterns

Paper to be given at the meeting of the American Political Science Association in Toronto on Sept. 3, 2009

Reflections on the Life, Thought, and Public Service of Paul B. Henry

Talk to be delivered to Grand Rapids Historical Society on Sept. 10, 2009

Dutch Americans between Dutch Secularism and American Evangelicals

Invited paper to be given at the conference on “Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations” at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, Netherlands on Oct. 16, 2009

A Disappearing God Gap? Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election

Paper to be given at the meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in Denver on Oct. 23, 2009

Evangelicals, Barack Obama, and the 2008 Election

Paper to be given at the meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Montreal on Nov. 7, 2009



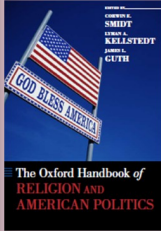
2009 Symposium on Religion and Politics — page 5



The Disappearing God Gap in American Politics — page 1



No Final Victories, No Final Defeats — page 10



Oxford Handbook of Religion & American Politics — page 5

Semester in Washington D.C. — page 4



Love Your Neighbor — page 7



Faith and Politics in a Post-Religious Right America — page 8



2009 Graduate Student Workshop — page 7

Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellowships in Poland

The Tocqueville Center for Legal and Political Thought at the Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Łódź in Łódź, Poland, is offering two post-doctoral teaching fellowships for young American political scientists whose primary field is political theory.

Recipients will spend the spring semester of 2010 in Łódź (mid-February to mid-June) and teach two courses each (one basic and one advanced). The basic course should be devoted to American politics (either the principles and institutions of American democracy or the contemporary dimensions of American foreign policy) and be addressed to students of law, history, sociology, philosophy, and political science. The advanced course should be aimed at graduate and upper-level undergraduate students and be devoted to more theoretical issues (looking either at American conservatism or American liberalism and libertarianism). The basic course should consist of open lectures (45 total contact hours), and the advanced course conducted as a

seminar (20 total contact hours). It will be possible for each fellow to complete teaching obligations within the first two to three months, thus reserving the remainder of the fellowship period for one's own research agenda. Each fellow will also be expected to present one academic paper for the faculty. Ideally, the topic for this paper will concern either American conservatism or American liberalism and will be based on the author's primary research. The Center would like to post each paper on its website and reserve to itself the right to publish a future volume of such papers.

The stipend for the fellowship will be 9000 PLN (currently about U.S. \$3020) per month. The recipient may be provided with a furnished University apartment for 400-500 PLN per month. Furnished apartments are also available in the city, but at higher prices.

The successful candidate will hold the Ph.D. and have at least one year's worth of classroom teaching experience. In addition, his or her

application materials must demonstrate both a devotion to scholarly excellence in the U.S. and a sensitivity to non-American intellectual experience, especially that of Central Europe.

Application materials should include the following: A letter of application describing the candidate's interest in the position as well as a statement detailing the particular courses the candidate is prepared to teach; proposed course syllabi and an outline of the scholarly paper to be presented to the faculty; a *curriculum vitae* with photo; three letters of recommendation; and a graduate transcript. Send applications to: Ms. Agnieszka Czernek, The Alexis de Tocqueville Center of Legal and Political Thought, Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Łódź, ul. Kopcińskiego 8/12, 90-232 Łódź, Poland. Application deadline is October 15, 2009. Preliminary questions may also be addressed to Prof. Bill Stevenson, Department of Political Science, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, 49546; 616-526-6235 or stew@calvin.edu. ~