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Religious Groups and the Conflict in Kosovo

In the wake of American and NATO action in Kosovo, there has been considerable discussion within the Christian community over whether or not such intervention fell within the "Just-War Tradition." Much less discussion and analysis, however, have occurred regarding how members of different religious traditions within American society have responded to the situation. This brief analysis seeks to provide some basic information about such matters, and it is based on data taken from a CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll conducted during April 30 to May 2, 1999. A total of 1014 respondents were surveyed. Given the nature of the questions asked as well as the limited number of respondents surveyed, analysis will be restricted to only those religious groups containing a "substantial" number of respondents within their ranks—in this case, specifically, evangelical Protestants, non-evangelical Protestants, Romans Catholics, and "seculars."

First, as is true within any kind of public opinion polling, the way in which a question is framed affects the nature of the answers received. Accordingly, this particular poll employed a "split-half" technique. One half of the respondents were asked the following question: "As you may know, the military alliance of Western countries called NATO has launched air and missile attacks against Serbian military targets in Yugoslavia. Do you favor or oppose the United States being a part of that military action?" The other half of the respondents were asked a question framed somewhat differently: with regard to "the current military action by the United States and its Western allies in the Yugoslavian regions of Kosovo,

and in other areas of the Balkans, do you approve or disapprove of the current U.S. military involvement in Yugoslavia?" Variation in the responses to these questions given by respondents falling within different religious traditions are shown below.

Several patterns are evident from these data. First, the level of support for American military action varied by the nature of the question asked. Respondents tended to express greater support for military action when the question was posed in terms of NATO and missile attacks than when the question was framed in terms of current military action in regions of the Balkans.

Second, members of different religious groups tended to respond differently to the Kosovo conflict. Seculars were among the most opposed to US action, though they trailed evangelical Protestants in their opposition when the question was posed in terms of the Balkans. Of the three religious groups analyzed, evangelical Protestants were the most opposed to, and Roman Catholics the most supportive of, military engagement—with non-evangelical Protestants falling in the middle.

Third, despite variation according to the nature of the question wording, the overall patterns of relative support for such action given by members of different religious groups remained basically identical regardless of specific question wording. Since the overall patterns were similar, the remaining analysis combines the responses to these two questions so as to ease the presentation of the analysis and to enable the full sample of respondents to be analyzed.

Certainly, differences in religious group membership are not the only

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	Evan. Protestant (N=267)	Non-Evan. Protestant (N=307)	Roman Catholic (N=284)	Secular (N=45)
NATO split-half				
1. Strongly oppose	33%	25%	22%	43%
2. Oppose	9	11	9	3
3. Uncertain	4	5	8	4
4. Favor	15	16	21	21
5. Strongly Favor	40	44	40	30
Mean score	3.21	3.43	3.48	2.92
Balkans split-half				
1. Strongly oppose	45%	32%	25%	43%
2. Oppose	6	16	11	2
3. Uncertain	5	4	7	2
4. Favor	9	17	19	24
5. Strongly Favor	35	31	39	28
Mean score	2.83	2.98	3.36	2.91

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factors that help to shape responses to the Kosovo conflict. As has been true with regard to other military engagements, support for American engagement varied according to certain socio-demographic characteristics. Though not shown here, support for US actions varied by: age (with increased age associated with increased support); education (with increased education associated with increased support); gender (with females more supportive than men); race (with whites more supportive than non-whites); frequency of church attendance (with lower rates of attendance associated with increased support); and, approval of Clinton in handling his job as President (with increased approval associated with increased support).

Given the effects of these other factors, how important were religious factors in shaping responses to the American military action? This issue is addressed in the next table. For purposes of this analysis, a Multiple Classification Analysis was run of responses to the two questions tapping responses to US action in Kosovo. Three variables served as the independent variables: religious group, level of church attendance, and level of approval for the Clinton presidency. Four variables—namely, age, education, race, and gender—were introduced as covariates or control variables in this analysis. Multiple classification analysis is based upon the extent to which the mean values of the dependent

Clinton presidency. Even after controls have been introduced, the respondents' evaluations of the Clinton presidency continue to be monotonically related to levels of approval for US action, with the resultant beta for the Clinton approval variable ranking relatively high at a value of .34.

Second, it is also clear that religious group membership had an independent impact on attitudes toward US action even after controls have been introduced for approval of the Clinton presidency, as well as for education, race, age, and gender. Once controls have been introduced, evangelical and non-evangelical

Protestants tend to mirror each other in their general, though relatively weak, opposition to the Kosovo action, while Catholics maintain their general support for U.S. action. Likewise, once controls have been introduced, seculars become the most supportive of the war efforts of the

variable found within different categories of the independent variables deviate from the grand mean, once controls for the various covariate variables and other independent variables have been introduced.

Several important points emerge from this analysis. First, responses to the US action in Kosovo were strongly tied to evaluations of the

four religious groups analyzed.

However, it is not only religious group membership that had an independent impact on attitudes toward action in Kosovo; church attendance also had an impact, even after controlling for religious groups membership (as well as all of the other variables noted above). However, the impact of church attendance on attitudes towards U.S. action is curvilinear in nature. Those who attended weekly were, on balance, somewhat less supportive of the military engagement than the nation as a whole (-.05 deviation from the grand mean), while those who attended rarely were more supportive of such action (.14 deviation from the grand mean). However, it was those who attended church "periodically," but less than weekly, who were the most opposed to such action (-.11 deviation from the grand mean).

Thus, even after controlling for the effects of various demographic variables as well as for the respondents' general approval level of Clinton's presidency, religious variables continue to have an impact on the positions adopted by the American electorate with regard to this particular matter of American foreign policy. Thus, despite the demise of "godless communism" and the fall of the Soviet Union, it appears that religious factors may well continue to play a role in shaping American public opinion on matters of US foreign policy.

	Unadjusted		Adjusted for	
Grand Mean= 3.21	Dev'n	Eta	Independents	+Covariates
			Dev'n	Beta
Clinton Approval				
Approve	.42		.47	
Neutral	.01		-.04	
Disapprove	-.68	.30	-.76	.34
Religious Group				
Evan. Protestant	-.20		-.05	
Non-Evan. Protestant	.02		-.05	
Roman Catholic	.23		.19	
Secular	-.29	.10	.56	.10
Church Attendance				
At least weekly	-.10		-.05	
With some regularity	-.10		-.11	
Seldom/Never	.17	.08	.14	.06

Henry Institute Hosts National Conference of Christians in Political Science



The Henry Institute served as the host for the second national conference of Christians in Political Science that was held at Calvin College, from June 17 to 20. R. Booth Fowler of the University of Wisconsin served as the program chair for the conference. Slightly more than 80 conferees registered and attended either some or all of the conference.

A total of nineteen different panels were organized that spanned the six different time slots available—with over fifty different scholarly papers being presented

(some panels were organized as roundtable discussions). The Rev. Richard John Neuhaus presented a public address in conjunction with the conference, and was involved in a roundtable discussion on “The Naked Public Square Revisited.”

One of the Henry Institute projects associated with the conference was to organize a series of papers across several panels that dealt with the relationship between religion and various specified topics of American politics. Basically, these assigned topics were those that are typically found in

any introduction to American politics text (e.g., political culture, interest groups, political parties, Congress, or the judiciary). The goal of this effort is to produce an edited volume on religion and American politics—a volume that could be used for a supplementary textbook within an undergraduate course. The Henry Institute is currently negotiating with different publishers as to which publisher will produce the volume.

New Henry Semester in Washington D.C.

Each spring semester, beginning spring 2000, Calvin College will offer the Henry Semester in Washington, D.C. program in conjunction with the Institute for Experiential Learning. The program combines a semester-long internship with seminar course work and offers a unique opportunity to combine academic study with first-hand experience of work and life in the nation's capital city.

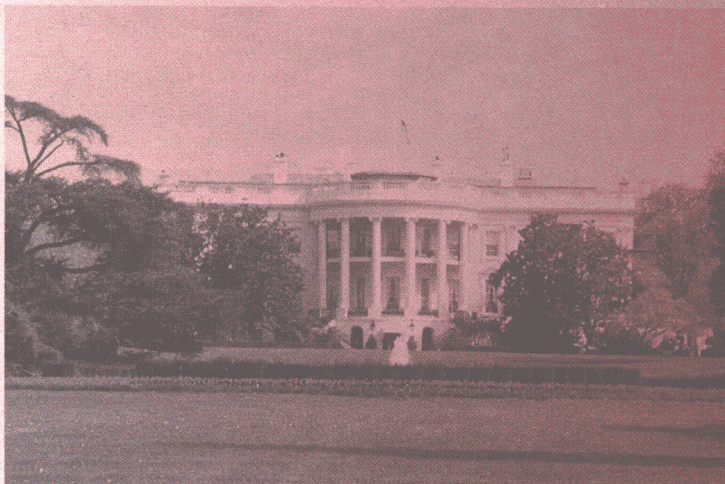
One of the mandates of the Henry Institute relates to undergraduate education—particularly the call to help train a new generation of both scholars and public servants who are interested and involved in the interplay of Christianity and politics. With Washington, D.C. as

the center of so much national and international policy-making, a Henry Washington Semester helps fulfill that mandate. One way to encourage people to become public servants is by providing a meaningful and exciting context in which to engage in such public service.

Students enrolled in the Henry Semester normally receive 14 semester hours of credit for their participation. The basic academic component of the semester, which entails two courses taken in conjunction with one's internship experience, is taught by a Calvin faculty member who accompanies students to the city and directs the semester. The IEL provides housing and helps with internship placement. These housing accommoda-

tions, for instructor and students alike, are located in apartment complexes in northern Virginia, just minutes from the middle of D.C. via the Metro.

To be accepted into the program, students must be second-semester sophomore or above and have a GPA of 2.5 or higher (in order to participate in the “Embassy and Diplomatic Scholars” program of the IEL, however, one must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher). In addition, students must have either completed POLS 201 (Introduction to American Politics) or have received the consent of the instructor. More information on the program is available on our website: www.calvin.edu/academic/pols/henry.



Coats Delivers Annual Henry Lecture

Former U.S. Senator Dan Coats of Indiana delivered the third annual Paul B. Henry Lecture on April 19, 1999.

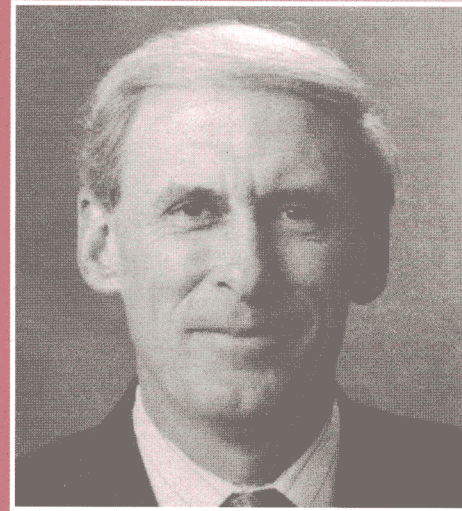
Each spring the Paul B. Henry Institute sponsors the annual Henry Lecture. The Lecture is intended to bring a prominent Christian political practitioner to Calvin College for a public lecture on the interplay of religion and politics. The lecturer usually spends more than a full day on campus and in the community, meeting with students in small informal groups or in their classes, getting to know other faculty and officers in the Calvin community, and visiting with interested citizens in the Grand Rapids area. In this way, the Institute hopes to inspire Calvin students and the community to actively seek to integrate a Christian worldview and practical politics.

In an effort to make these lectures as nonpartisan or bipartisan as possible, the Institute has established a rotation of sorts with a Republican official delivering the address one year and a Democratic official the next. The first three lectures have been given by U.S. Senators just completing service in the Senate. The 1999 lecture, by Senator Dan Coats of Indiana, was the third Henry Lecture, with the first delivered by Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon and

the second by Senator Paul Simon of Illinois.

Senator Coats, now associated with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and a Washington, D.C. law firm, addressed the issue of the relationship between government and civil society. Coats' message was based on a Tocquevillian perspective, as he contended that the vitality of the American republic is tied to the vibrancy of a multiplicity of institutions that make up a complex civil society. Freedom requires individual self-discipline and virtue, qualities that cannot be instilled through democratic institutions. Thus, while the vibrancy of the American republic is dependent upon individual self-discipline and virtue, it cannot directly instill such qualities in its people, for to do so would violate the very liberties people enjoy under democratic republics.

Rather, it is the role of the institutions of civil society to train people to become good and virtuous citizens. Thus, liberal democracy is dependent upon "conservative" institutions to teach the moral habits necessary to sustain the very existence of liberal democratic life. Institutions such as the family, the church, and other non-governmental entities, not only may, but must, use moral authority to shape, develop, and



train those individuals (citizens) who fall under its domain.

Senator Coats, like many others, has been distressed by the weakening of civil society and the associated moral crisis in American life. However, he does not believe that government can reconstruct civil society directly, for to do so would be a contradiction in terms. Neither does he believe, as many conservatives do, that virtuous citizens and a healthy democracy will necessarily follow from reducing the scope of government and letting the market work its will. Rather, Senator Coats has sought to use legislative authority to encourage, rather than restrict, the morally constructive actions undertaken in the non-governmental sector.

CCCU Faculty Development Workshop in Political Science

Faculty teaching political science at a member institution of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) are invited to apply for participation in a workshop to be held at Calvin College on July 30-August 6, 2000, to be convened by Dr. Stephen Monsma of Pepperdine University. For more

information and application instructions, write or email Dr. Harold Heie, Director, Center for Christian Studies, Gordon College, Wenham, MA 01984 (ccs@gordon.edu), or obtain this information directly from www.cccu.org/projects/.

Project Zero Report

Since early 1999 the Henry Institute has been working on a collaborative research project in Kent County, Michigan, that collects information on faith-based delivery of social services and simultaneously assists a local community agency in program evaluation.

The State of Michigan has been a national leader in welfare reform innovation. One of its experiments is to depend upon churches and other religious organizations to provide volunteer mentors to assist welfare clients in entering the job market or improving their job performance if they already have employment. This trend toward greater participation by religious organizations in social service delivery is growing nationwide, boosted significantly by the "charitable choice" provisions in the 1996 federal welfare reform law. Scholars across the country are now evaluating a wide range of questions related to this growing practice.

In Kent County, Michigan, the agency in charge of recruiting and training these volunteer mentors was inter-

ested in evaluating the effectiveness of their training program and studying the relationships that develop between volunteer mentors and program clients. That interest dovetailed nicely with the Henry Institute's interest in questions related to "social capital." Specifically, the Institute was interested in the effect volunteering might have on a person's political and religious views and actions. We also thought that policy makers would be interested in such questions. If faith-based delivery of services expands, it needs both to be effective and in some sense self-perpetuating as the need for mentors and volunteers will rise rapidly when partnerships between government agencies and faith-based institutions proliferate.

So out of these mutual interests and the creative use of Institute and other Calvin College funds, the Henry Institute helped evaluate the mentoring program and the effects the volunteer experience had on mentors. Professor Koopman worked with Calvin College's Social Research Center and two under-

graduate assistants in administering "pre-volunteering" and "post-volunteering" surveys to mentors. A baseline survey of all Kent County residents was sent to obtain reference points to make comparisons of mentors and the general county population. Some of the results have been presented in academic papers delivered at professional meetings. Two papers coauthored by Professor Koopman and his student assistants have been submitted to professional journals in social work and public policy, with one paper already accepted for publication.

Additional research in this area is planned, as the Henry Institute has applied to outside funders to study variations in welfare mentoring programs throughout the state of Michigan. The entire project has been a major effort in meeting two key Institute goals: developing research and publication opportunities for undergraduates in the field of religion and politics, and advancing the general study of the interplay between religion and public life.

Member of South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Speaks

Professor Pieter Meiring, University of Pretoria, spoke on his experiences as a member of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee on September 16. Through the years, Professor Meiring has served in a number of positions in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa. For many years, he was involved in efforts to persuade the DRC to change its policy on racial issues, and to urge the

church toward reunification with non-white member churches of the DRC family. And, in 1982, he was among a group of 134 ministers of the DRC who published an Open Letter to the Church, calling the church to task for its justification of apartheid. Professor Meiring was invited by President Nelson Mandela to serve on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-1998).

During this period, he traveled extensively inside and outside South Africa to speak on justice and reconciliation. His recent book *A Chronicle of the Truth Commission*, with a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu with whom he served on the Commission, has been hailed to be an important document related to South Africa's reconciliation efforts.

Institute Notes

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, February 9, 2000. **Dr. Adrian Helleman**, Moscow State University, "Church and State in Russia Today." 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center Lecture Hall.

Wednesday, March 1, 2000. **Dr. Michael Budde**, Department of Political Science, DePaul University, "Chaplain to Caesar: Globalization, Civil Religion, and the Church." 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center Lecture Hall.

Wednesday, April 5, 2000. **Dr. David Long**, State Department, retired, "The Legacy of Reformed Mission Activity in Middle Eastern Politics Today." 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center Lecture Hall.

Monday, April 17, 2000. **The Honorable John Lewis**, U.S. Representative. The Annual Henry Lecture on Faith and Public Life. 7:30 p.m., Gezon Auditorium.

Wednesday, July 19, 2000. **Dr. Charles Glenn**, Boston University, "The Ambiguous

Embrace: Government and Faith-Based Schools." 7:30 p.m.

Faculty Notes:

Doug Koopman is beginning an edited volume of Paul Henry's writings on religion and politics.

Corwin Smidt is in the final stages of editing two volumes, *Religion and American Politics*, and *Religion, Social Capital, and Democratic Life*.

Video tape availability:

The Henry Institute makes videotapes of most of the addresses and events it hosts. These are available at cost for anyone who would like them. We have available tapes of the **Pieter Meiring** lecture, a **roundtable on Christianity and politics** featuring eight Calvin alumni now serving in the Michigan legislature, and **A. James Reichley** on "Religion and Party Politics."

Research Links:

Looking for research sources on the

interplay between religion and politics? Check out our links at: www.calvin.edu/academic/pols/henry/links.htm. Please send us a note so that we can add to or otherwise modify this page.

The Henry Institute Honored

Since 1989, The Templeton Foundation based in Radnor, Pennsylvania, has periodically issued *The Templeton Guide*, a publication that notes different colleges nationwide that "have a record of inspiring students to lead ethical and civic-minded lives." Calvin College was once again selected to be included in the 1999 *Guide*, having been named to all eight guides the Foundation has issued. But, what was different with this *Guide* was that it also included a special section on "Exemplary College Programs" in which the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics was saluted as a model for civic education on a college campus.

Henry Website

For more information on the Henry Institute and timely updates on our activities, be sure to see our website at www.calvin.edu/academic/pols/henry