

and the suppression of freedom of religion. He concluded with the observation that "Marxism has been the greatest fantasy of our century." Is liberalism the greatest fantasy of our times?

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### **The Catholic Church in State Politics: Negotiating Prophetic Demands and Political Realities**

By David Yamane

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005. 187 pages. \$65 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper)

**Reviewer:** Melissa J. Wilde, *University of Pennsylvania*

In *The Catholic Church in State Politics*, David Yamane systematically examines how the Roman Catholic Church engages in state-level politics through organizations known as state Catholic conferences, "permanent, non-Canonical Church agenc[ies], composed of the dioceses within a state," that coordinate, "the Church's public policy and communication with state government, non-Catholic churches and secular agencies." (p. 50) Yamane's goal is to examine how religion plays a role in the American political system, and explain how and why the Church engages in politics in some states more than others, in different ways and over time.

Theoretically, Yamane is interested in engaging secularization theory. He does so not in relationship to whether religion's influence is waxing or waning, as has been the typical focus, but in relationship to the type of influence religion has, and how religious institutions go about trying to achieve that influence within our system of democratic institutions. As Yamane puts it, "The challenge... is not to ask *whether* religion matters in public life, for clearly it does; rather, the challenge is to understand *how, when and why* religion matters." (p. 7)

Yamane examines these questions through five empirical chapters. The first chapter provides the reader with the history of the United States' national and state-level conferences. In the second chapter, Yamane creatively uses data from a 1970 survey of state Catholic conferences which he replicated. He finds that the conferences have grown in size, resources and number, and have become increasingly professionalized with better-educated, more experienced lay staff.

This chapter also presents the first of the two most important points made in the book, that state Catholic conferences have a *dual structure* – with the *authority structure*, the bishops who give the conferences their agenda and set their priorities, being largely separate from the day-to-day administration of the conferences' lobbying efforts or the *agency structure*. Yamane argues that this dual structure allows the state conferences to be "faithful *and* effective representatives of the Church in state politics."

The third chapter puts forward the most intriguing part of Yamane's thesis. It examines the role of the Catholic Church's "seamless garment" ideology, which because of its right-friendly anti-abortion platform but left-friendly economic and social platforms, necessitates that Catholic state conferences have a *bipartisan* lobbying orientation. The conferences reportedly see their bipartisan status as

an advantage, in that they can and often do, work with both Republicans and Democrats on various issues. However, Yamane also demonstrates that anti-abortion lobby efforts are invoked more than any other, and though they are not the only priority of these organizations, they are certainly the first priority.

In the fourth chapter, Yamane examines how these Catholic lobbyists negotiated the legitimacy concerns raised by the Catholic sex abuse scandal. Interestingly, he finds that while it had some concrete political consequences, it did not negatively affect the lobbying efforts of most conferences, nor the way that the lobbyists and their bishops (if they were not directly involved in the scandal) were seen by politicians.

In the final chapter, he examines the various arguments made by Catholic lobbyists as they engage in state-level politics. He finds that they use a variety of both religious and secular arguments when making cases to politicians, a result, he argues, of the fact that they are dealing with secular political institutions.

In sum, *The Catholic Church in State Politics* provides a wealth of empirical information about state-level politics, lobbying efforts and organizations, and the way in which these lobbyists must manage their religious beliefs with the need for political expediency that their jobs mandate. The book is clearly and engagingly written and will thus be of use to scholars of American religion, politics and institutions more generally.

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**Awesome Families:**

**The Promise of Healing Relationships in the International Churches of Christ**

By Kathleen E. Jenkins

Rutgers University Press, 2005. 283 pages. \$22.95 (paper)

**Reviewer:** David Yamane, *Wake Forest University*

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes famously characterized human life in the state of nature as "nasty, brutish, and short." He was talking about individuals, of course, but the same could be said for the life of an American sectarian movement called the International Churches of Christ. ICOC was founded in 1979 out of the Lexington, Mass. Church of Christ, with 30 people in a living room under the leadership of pastor Kip McKean. The movement seems to have peaked in the 1990s, during the time Kathleen Jenkins was conducting fieldwork in a 300-member congregation in New England. By 2004, as Jenkins was completing this book, the ICOC as a unified movement had "essentially fallen." Throughout its brief history, ICOC confronted charges that it was not a healing community of faith but a destructive cult. What lessons can we learn from such a brief and controversial life? According to *Awesome Families*, plenty.

ICOC's rise and fall reflects the confluence of issues that people living in the late 20th century United States faced, especially uncertainty about gender roles, a profound restructuring of community and family life, and related concerns about the quality of personal relationships and the well-being of children. The movement attempted to address these problems through a novel combination