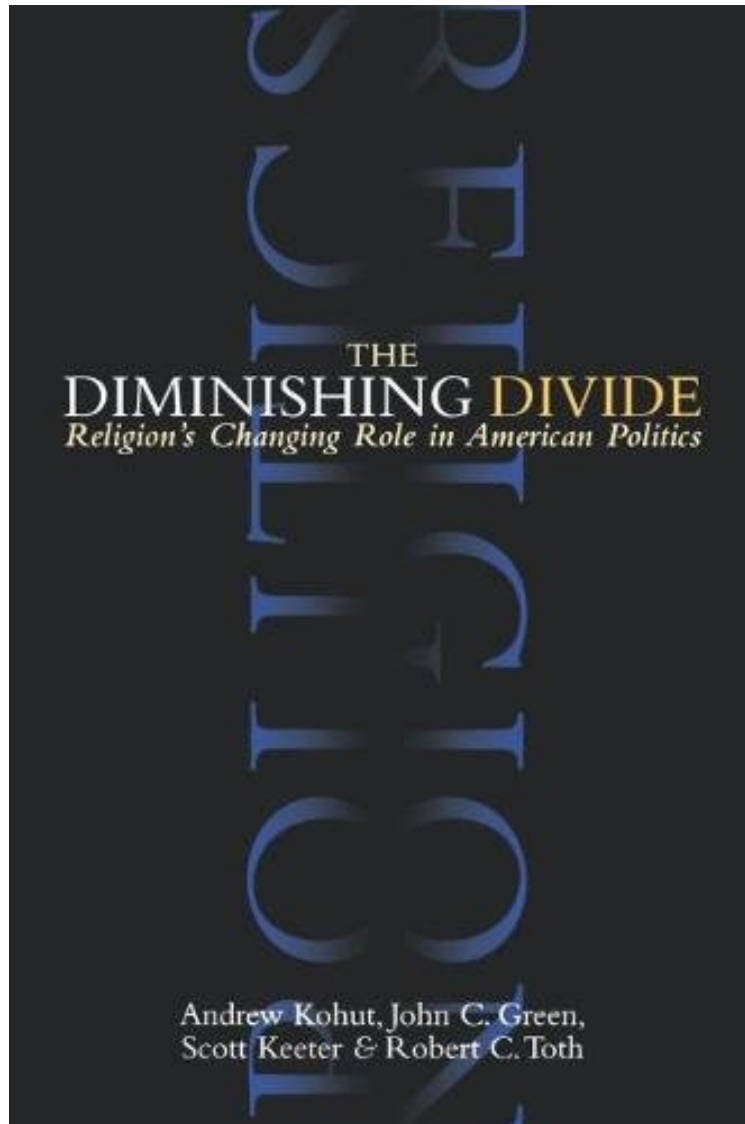


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## The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics

*Andrew Kohut, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, Robert C. Toth*  
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**Andrew Kohut, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, Robert C. Toth : The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics:

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution forbids the creation of an official state church, and we hear the phrase "separation of church and state" so frequently that it may surprise us to note that no such barrier exists between religion and politics. Religion is, and always has been, woven into the fabric of American political life. In the last two decades, however, the role of religion in politics has become more direct—almost a blunt, self-conscious force in the political process. The national consequences of this "diminishing divide" between religion and politics have brought new groups into politics, altered party coalitions, and influenced campaigns and election results. Churches and other religious institutions have become more actively engaged in the political process, and religious people have increased the level and broadened the range of their political participation. While the public is more accepting of the role of religion in shaping today's political landscape, the issue of how much political power certain religious groups enjoy continues to provoke concern. Drawing on extensive survey data from the Pew Research Center, the National Election Studies, and other sources, *The Diminishing Divide* illuminates the historical relationship between religion and politics in the United States and explores the ways in which religion will continue to alter the political landscape in the century before us. A historical overview of religion in U.S. politics sets the tone as the book examines the patchwork quilt of American religion and the changing role of religious institutions in American political life since the 1960s. The book explores the complex relations between religion and political attitudes, as well as that of religion and political behavior—particularly with respect to party affiliation and voting habits. Finally, *The Diminishing Divide* offers a look at the future. As candidates and elected officials increasingly air their personal faith in public places with apparent political intent, and as parishioners are marshaled into political action by clergy and political groups, the authors lay out the background against which religion's power in American political life will be played in the new century.

"A new book, *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics* (Brookings Institution, 2000), reports that whereas a narrow majority of Americans in 1968 wanted churches to stay out of politics, that opposition had eroded by 1996, w" Gustav Niebuhr, *Religion Reporter*, *New York Times*, 9/3/2000 "The most up-to-date and comprehensive collection of data on religious voting patterns today, this book is essential reading for the election campaign." Edd Doerr, *Voice of Reason*, 10/11/2000 "a fine introduction to this field for scholars... an excellent supplemental text for political behavior courses and for (some) introductory classes." Clyde Wilcox, *Georgetown University, The Journal of Politics*, 11/1/2001 "... a fine work that makes a major contribution to understanding recent changes in the mix of religion and politics on the American scene. The book is certainly suitable for undergraduate courses that mix political themes with sociological or political analysis." Douglas L. Koopman, *Calvin College, American of Politics*, 11/1/2000 "[*The Diminishing Divide*] make[s] excellent use of the ever-increasing body of survey data that includes religion as an important analytic variable.... It is highly accessible in tone. The book is in fact a very good example of how social science can be made digestible to the layperson. The style is straightforward, the layout is clear, and the authors have made a special effort to present data in charts that are quickly understandable to those whose ready grasp of more typical ways of presenting data might be challenged." Frank Newport, *The Gallup Organization, Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1/1/2003

About the Author Andrew Kohut is director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. John C. Green is director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics and professor of political science at the University of Akron. Scott Keeter is professor and chair of public and international affairs at George Mason University. Robert C. Toth is a former national and foreign correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times* and a senior associate of the Pew Research Center.