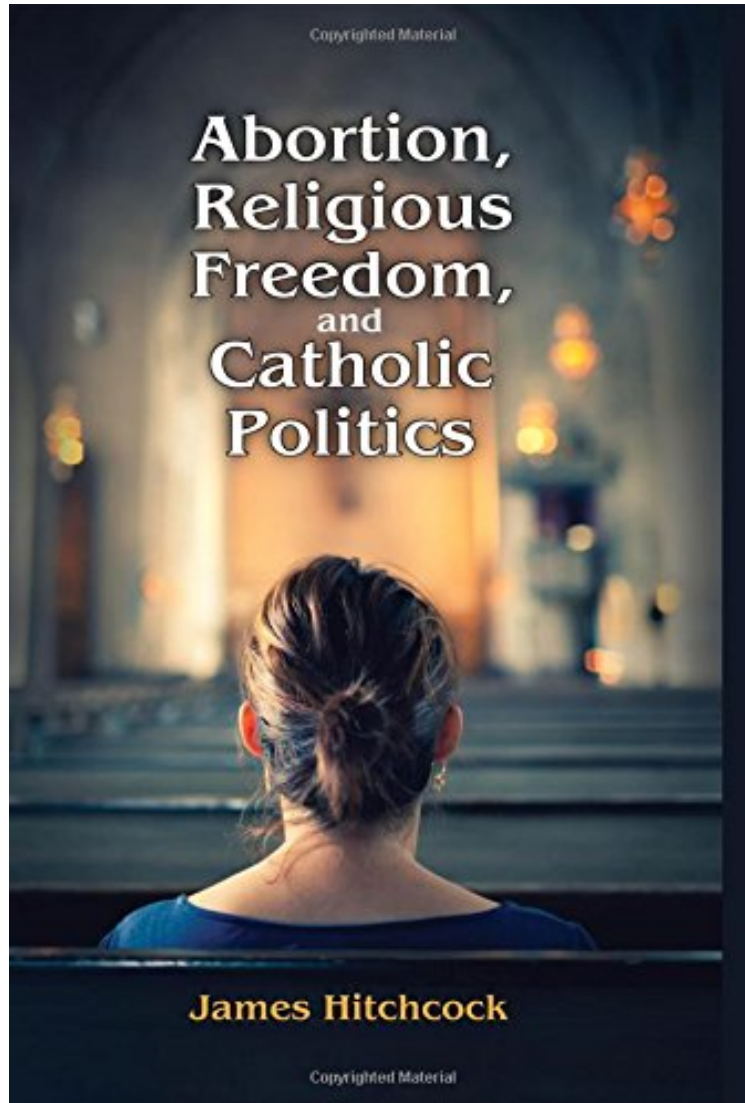


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Abortion, Religious Freedom, and Catholic Politics

James Hitchcock

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James Hitchcock : Abortion, Religious Freedom, and Catholic Politics before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Abortion, Religious Freedom, and Catholic Politics:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Serious Hitchcock Errors Mean That Book Must Be Corrected. Portion of a review in The Wanderer, June 1, 2017 By Customer In late April I learned by chance on the Internet of a recent Hitchcock book, Abortion, Religious Freedom, and Catholic Politics (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, N.J.). I was able to see a few pages online, including another man's words being put in my mouth. Concerned, I ordered a copy. Hitchcock's new book is peppered with inaccuracies, false or misleading statements, and lack of

research. Despite the broader-sounding title, much of the book is an attack on *The Wanderer*, including me as one of its writers. He insists on a few themes regardless of the facts, including that *The Wanderer* doesn't regard abortion as a crucial issue. (How many of you readers would agree with that?) I'll take up a few of his assaults upon me as the person whom I know best. Describing Goldwater as fanatically pro-abortion (p. 69), Hitchcock falsely says Duggan that I considered the pro-abortion Goldwater worthy of unqualified support. The historian names me as one of the faithless Paleoconservatives who were concerned that Reagan Democrats made abortion their primary issue and were oblivious to true conservatism. We Paleoconservatives deal with the life issues as liberals use the seamless garment, Hitchcock says we attempt to persuade pro-lifers to transcend their narrow outlook and support a wider agenda. I reject this. I was appalled at Goldwater's switch, and thrilled with the advent of Reagan Democrats. Hitchcock never quotes any admission by me of my alleged betrayals, or my admiration of what he pretends that I stand for. Hitchcock never contacted me to discuss or try to verify any of his baseless beliefs, to state why he thought they should be accepted, or to reveal what he planned to write. Coincidentally, a different, much younger historian who did contact me not long ago was interested in my pro-life work in the latter 20th century and conducted a recorded telephone interview. She actually already had researched my pro-life past and didn't express any of the strange conclusions Hitchcock assumes. Hitchcock alleges that I was covering up for Goldwater and O'Connor. He couldn't be more wrong. Has he forgotten anything I wrote for the *National Catholic Register* opposing O'Connor's confirmation to the High Court, including pro-life leader Gerstler's strong case against her? Of course, Goldwater retired from the U.S. Senate at the end of 1986 and died in 1998, so maybe Hitchcock has forgotten. Hitchcock and I, being older guys, might tend to think in terms of the Goldwaters and Reagans in our younger times being almost contemporary figures today, but to more recently born folks, their names may be barely recognized. Among much other pro-life journalism, I covered the National Right to Life Committee's annual convention in Anaheim, Calif., in 1980, resulting in my three-page article in the August 1980 issue of *Conservative Digest* headlined, *Pro-lifers on the march, gaining converts; coming of age as potent political force*. The sub-headline above my reporting said this convention shows dynamism of crusade, illustrates breadth of opposition to abortion. That's real, published evidence of my work back when Hitchcock inexplicably wishes to think I consorted to diminish pro-lifers and advance the careers of fanatically pro-abortion politicians. Because I learned of his attacks only after the book was printed, I couldn't prompt him to think or research more carefully before publication. This inaccurate work must be seriously corrected by the publisher. Because Hitchcock is working from printed material, he doesn't have much excuse for the errors he makes. And no excuse at all when he errs this way time after time. As we'll see more of next week, Hitchcock asserts that I said certain words when he actually means that a person or source I quoted for a newspaper article said them. Surely he knows that when a historian writes about anyone else, that famous person's words aren't the historian's own remarks. When I quoted a Phoenix Republican conservative activist, Rob Haney, strongly criticizing Sen. John McCain in a September 19, 2013, *Wanderer* story, Hitchcock omits the fact it clearly was Haney speaking and puts his words into my mouth instead (p. 62). Careful to use quotation marks and ellipsis, the historian still doesn't get the speaker correct. In the same story, I quoted a different local conservative speaking positively of McCain, but Hitchcock ignores him, as he also does at other times when he fails to acknowledge expressions of support for McCain. Some Hitchcock themes are that *The Wanderer* didn't give McCain fair coverage, and didn't consider the abortion issue crucial. He reaches back to page 5 of *The Wanderer* for a four-paragraph letter to the editor (p. 61) to note a critic of McCain (November 20, 2008), but ignores prominent coverage with positive comments about McCain, even on page one: *Arizona Pro-Life Leader Says McCain Can Be Trusted To Select Good Judges* (March 6, 2008). It's no secret that many millions of Republicans are critical of maverick McCain, often so loved by liberal media for undermining the GOP, but that doesn't mean all positive comments about him are banned in *The Wanderer*. On another topic, Hitchcock writes (p. 57) that I identified GOP presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee as being pro-life on December 13, 2007, but Huckabee was the only mainstream Republican candidate about whom that fact was acknowledged, and it was not repeated. Leaving aside the baseless claim that only Huckabee was thus acknowledged, we see *The Wanderer's* online archives show that description indeed was repeated later. My top story for the February 14, 2008, issue said the National Right to Life Committee gave Huckabee its strongest rating for any GOP candidate still in the race, and NRLC expressed gratitude for McCain's and Mitt Romney's stands. The February 21, 2008, *Wanderer* had a story headlined, *Huckabee Draws Distinction With McCain On Pro-Life Issues* (p. 8). On March 6, 2008, I recalled in a front-page article that Huckabee was surprised the previous November when, despite his own strong pro-life record, the NRLC gave its presidential endorsement to former Tennessee U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson. However, Thompson dropped out of the race in January 2008, and Huckabee left in early March 2008. In another of his serious errors, Hitchcock claims (p. 172) *The Wanderer* once again revealed that abortion wasn't a crucial issue because it supported Donald Trump for the presidency. After all, Hitchcock continued, the name of passionately pro-life presidential candidate Rick Santorum went unmentioned in 2015 in *The Wanderer*, except in one last-page article by an unfamiliar writer (June 11). Could this be true? Maybe an editor thought Santorum lost news value by failing to win the GOP presidential nomination in 2012? Actually, a quick online archives search reveals that Santorum was mentioned in eight articles in 2015, usually briefly within longer reports. But one was a prominent three-column-wide story I wrote on page 3 in the October 15, 2015, issue, with his

name in the kicker part of the headline, Santorum Urges Making Difference. As for the June 11 story by the unfamiliar writer on the last page, that was LifeSiteNews Ben Johnson about Santorum announcing his bid for the 2016 GOP presidential nomination. This stretched across the top half of the back page (p. 8A) of the first section of a two-section newspaper. Election Predictions We've just looked at just some of Hitchcock's erroneous and misleading statements about me. And did you know the surprising fact that Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan is Catholic (p. 163)? Hitchcock claims she is. More than a year ago, before Justice Antonin Scalia died, there had been considerable notice taken in the news of the fact that the majority-Protestant United States had a Supreme Court of six Catholics and three Jews. But the word apparently didn't get through to Hitchcock about who they were. With the book's press date immediately after the November 8 presidential election, Hitchcock forecast that Trump was almost certain to be defeated by Hillary Clinton, but even if Trump somehow won, the historian said, the pro-life movement would nonetheless be finished (p. 194). Even if I write five newspaper articles, that wouldn't cover all of Hitchcock's errors adequately. He, after all, had an entire book to toy with. But we'll look into this some more next week. Don't bother with this book if you want to maintain your respect for Hitchcock's previous reputation.

Throughout its history the Catholic Church has taken positions on many subjects that are in one sense political, but in another sense are primarily moral, such as contraception, homosexuality, and divorce. One such issue, abortion, has split not only the United States, but Catholics as well. Catholics had to confront these issues within the framework of a democratic society that had no official religion. *Abortion, Religious Freedom, and Catholic Politics* is a study of opposing American Catholic approaches to abortion, especially in terms of laws and government policies. After the ruling of *Roe vs. Wade*, many pro-life advocates no longer felt their sentiments and moral code aligned with Democrats. For the first time, Catholics, as an entire group, became involved in U.S. politics. Abortion became one of the principal points of division in American Catholicism: a widening split between liberal Catholic Democrats who sought to minimize the issue and other Catholics, many of them politically liberal, whose pro-life commitments caused them to support Republicans. James Hitchcock discusses the 2016 presidential campaign and how it altered an already changed political landscape. He also examines the Affordable Care Act, LGBT rights, and the questions they raise about religious liberty.

Master historian James Hitchcock turns his eye in this timely volume to the 2016 Presidential contest and how abortion might affect it. Hitchcock is mainly interested in how, since *Roe vs. Wade*, abortion as a political issue (including within that term the politics of judicial appointments) has dramatically affected Catholics' political behavior. Given the size of the Catholic vote, that drama has in turn contributed to a realignment of American politics.... Hitchcock traces the Catholic political narrative with painstaking attention to the primary sources, and ingeniously shows how the Catholic far right mirrors, in some interesting ways, the Catholic left's approach to the politics of abortion. His analysis and judgments are invariably insightful, and sound. Gerard V. Bradley, University of Notre Dame

About the Author: James Hitchcock is professor emeritus of history at St. Louis University and the author of over half a dozen books, including *Catholicism and Modernity*, *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life*, and *History of the Catholic Church*.