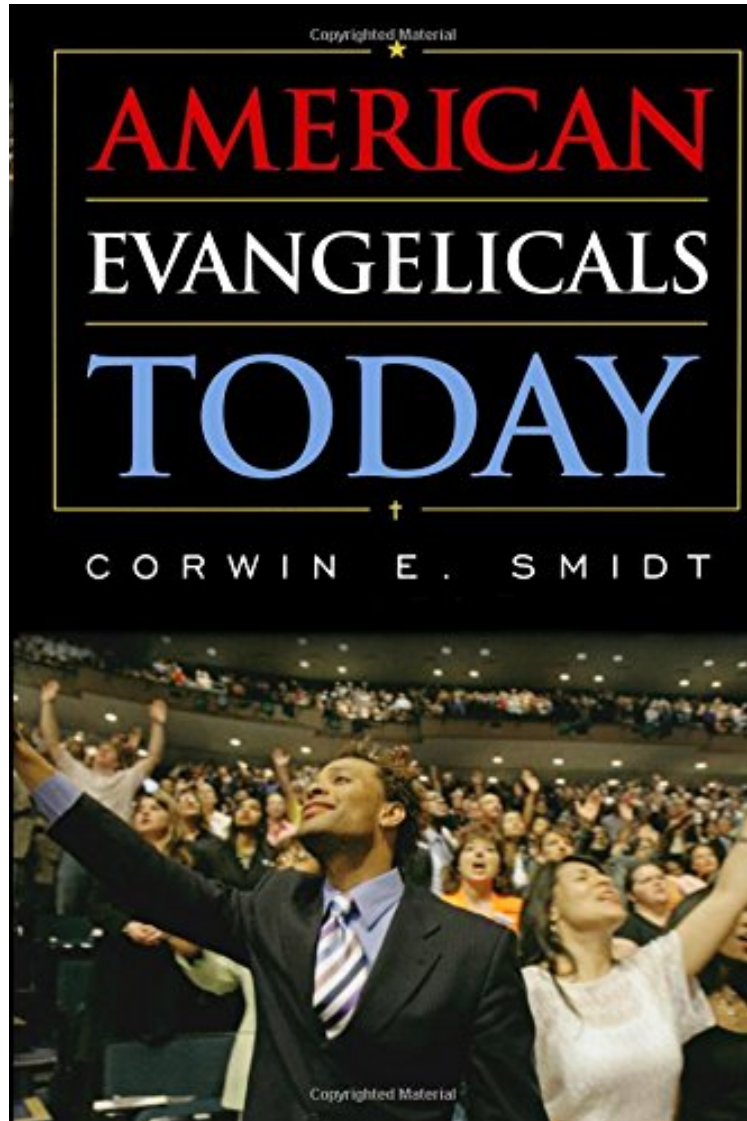


(Free and download) American Evangelicals Today

American Evangelicals Today

Corwin E. Smidt

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Corwin E. Smidt : American Evangelicals Today before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Evangelicals Today:

American Evangelicals Today assesses the contemporary social, religious, and political characteristics of evangelical Protestants today, and it does so in light of (1) whether these characteristics are similar to, or different from, the corresponding characteristics of adherents of other major faith traditions in American religious life, and (2) the extent

which these particular characteristics among evangelicals may have changed over the past four decades. In addition, it analyzes the extent which evangelicals are divided today, and it does so within the framework of four potential factors that might shape such divisions -- racial/ethnic differences, generational differences, educational differences, and religious differences. *American Evangelicals Today* is designed to serve as an accessible, but scholarly, overview of American evangelicals, one that is appealing to all scholars, students, and laity alike. Smidt offers a discussion of the nature of evangelical Protestantism, highlights the particular analytical issues at play when one seeks to determine just who are to be classified as evangelicals, and reveals some of the contradictory findings that can emerge through the use of these different analytical frameworks for defining evangelicals. The volume not only analyzes the current characteristics of evangelicals in light of those exhibited by other religious traditions as well as how evangelicals have changed over time, but it looks toward the future, addressing generational differences and other possible factors for change among evangelical Protestants.

From Booklist Evangelicals are often viewed as being politically and socially conservative, predominantly white, and found in greater numbers in the South than elsewhere in the country. Although there is some truth to these broad claims, the real story is infinitely more complex and nuanced. Smidt has completed a seemingly exhaustive review of the scholarly literature on evangelicals, though the 2007 Pew Religious Landscape Survey serves as the foundation of his study. Its massive sample size allows for analysis of the differences between evangelicals and other faith traditions as well as differences among evangelicals themselves. Some of the findings may surprise. For example, only one-fifth of evangelicals view the Christian Right or Tea Party favorably. And while the groups views on abortion and homosexuality may upset some further toward the Left, evangelicals do not hold policy views that place them at some political extreme. Finally, they enjoy the highest participation rates in volunteer work and other civic activities. Academic yet accessible, Smidts work is intensely data driven. Though not a page-turner, it is, nevertheless, an illuminating analysis of a much-discussed tradition. --Christopher McConnell During national political campaigns, polling organizations churn out numbers almost daily that include something about evangelical Protestants. Journalists pick up small ticks in the data and turn them into headlines that become pronouncements about social trends. Thankfully, Corwin E. Smidt has now given us a thorough and judicious assessment of the data. *American Evangelicals Today* provides a valuable roadmap through the thickets of journalistic and academic prose. Taking a fresh look at the evidence, each of the chapters offers a more complex view of who evangelicals are, what they believe, and how they seek to engage their communities. (Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University) It has been a long time since we have had a definitive, national-level, empirical study of American evangelicals. Many lately have felt in the dark about the current state of American evangelicalism. Corwin E. Smidts new book dispels that dimness with this impressive, rigorous, comprehensive updating of American evangelicalism today (Christian Smith, director, Center for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Notre Dame) Unlike much popular treatment of American evangelicals, this book by Corwin E. Smidt is measured, thorough, balanced, discerning, and informative. Who are "evangelicals"? And what do extensive, carefully analyzed surveys say about their education, racial profile, gender makeup, social views, political actions, theological beliefs, and more? Smidt's answers to these questions are as clear as they can possibly be. (Mark A. Noll, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at University of Notre Dame) This book provides an accessible and highly informative portrait of American evangelicals social, religious, and political characteristics. Those who want to know how evangelicals compare to others, how they have changed over time, and how they differ amongst themselves, will find answers here. (Mark Chaves, professor of sociology, religion, and divinity, Duke University) An expert, it is commonly said, has forgotten more about a subject than anyone else ever knew. I'd use that phrase to characterize Corwin E. Smidt but I'm not sure he's ever forgotten anything about American evangelicals. His new book, *American Evangelicals Today*, is the most comprehensive, insightful and perceptive book on the topic, the first source I'll recommend to students interested in the subject. A masterful summary of his long career as a pioneer in the social scientific study of evangelical Protestants, the book is a triumph. (Kenneth D. Wald) Corwin E. Smidt presents evangelicals as they are, not as some wish they would be. Drawing on a massive dataset, he paints a state-of-the-art portrait of a dynamic subculture. Documenting change and continuity, this book should put a damper on both triumphalist and declinist narratives of American evangelicalism. (John Schmalzbauer, Ph.D., Missouri State University) Corwin E. Smidts well-written, historically informed, and thoroughly researched portrait of American evangelicals is a major improvement over previous assessments of this sizeable but often poorly understood group. He uses several recent large-scale surveys to document the theological, demographic, and generational diversity among contemporary evangelicals, and to contrast their beliefs and political involvement with those of other Christian denominations and nonbelievers. (Susan Hansen, University of Pittsburgh (emerita)) Smidt provides a careful, thorough overview of white Evangelical Protestants in the US that is rooted in empirical data and objective in nature, which is essential and long overdue. Throughout the book, Smidt, one of the top scholars of religion and politics in the US, devotes a good deal of attention to matters of definition and measurement. This is too often lacking in the discussion of American Evangelicals and much appreciated here. Grounding his definition of Evangelicals in religious tradition (although other definitional options are outlined as well), Smidt offers concise,

highly readable chapters on the history, size, social characteristics, religious beliefs and practices, social theology, civic life (writ large), and political lives of American Evangelicals. The book closes with a quick summary and an insightful look into the future. Smidt states that "there is a need today for a more systematic analysis of evangelicals. . . that provides a broader overview of their current social, religious, and political characteristics." Smidt is right about this, and here he delivers in full. Essential for scholars whose work deals with Evangelicals in the US and highly recommended for all other readers. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All readership levels. (CHOICE) American Evangelicals Today provides several important contributions. First, it is a rather sizable empirical study that provides an expansive look at evangelicals and complicates stereotypical views of who evangelicals are and what they believe. Second, it presents evidence that differences are emerging between older and younger evangelicals, especially over issues like homosexuality. Finally, it demonstrates that evangelicalism is still a vibrant tradition in the United States but one that is poised for great change in the coming decades. . . . Smidts work is an important contribution to the continuing historiography on evangelicalism. (Journal Of Southern Religion) Those who are curious about 'American evangelicals' may enjoy reading Corwin Smidts book, American Evangelicals Today. This may be particularly true for persons who wish to grasp a general overview of the social history of American evangelicalism via the 'traditional scholars.' Based on three surveys, Smidt describes extensively various beliefs and behaviors that are associated with American evangelicals. Perhaps, the greatest strength of this book is its comparative data concerning particular demographic shifts. . . . [I]f readers are not ready to investigate 'American evangelicals today' via SNA, self-organized criticality, emergence, chaos (nonlinear models), fractals (non-Euclidian geometry), complexity theory, and/or cellular automata, and want a quick descriptive overview on this subject as a group via survey data, Smidts book may be a good place to begin. (Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly) About the Author Corwin E. Smidt is professor emeritus of political science at Calvin College, where he also served as the director of the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics for fifteen years. Smidt is the author or editor of numerous books, including In God We Trust?: Religion and American Political Life and The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics, and currently serves as a Research Fellow with the Henry Institute.