

# **Wesleyan or Fundamentalist? Political and Theological Stances of Nazarene Pastors<sup>1</sup>**

Linda Beail, Point Loma Nazarene University  
Greg Crow, Point Loma Nazarene University

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## **I. Nazarene Clergy as Political Actors and Catalysts: Nature of the Study**

During the 2000 Presidential election, clergy in 18 different religious denominations and -- traditions including Nazarene pastors -- were surveyed regarding the nature and level of their political activity. Researchers hoped to learn many things, including how theological beliefs might be influencing political attitudes and behavior, and whether or not pastors served as political cue-givers, mobilizing members of their congregations.

In October 2000, the General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene agreed to provide the researchers with a list of senior pastor names and addresses for all 5103 churches in the United States. A sample of 1200 of these pastors was randomly selected to be surveyed. The first wave was mailed November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000 (November 6<sup>th</sup> for the West Coast recipients) to ensure that the pastors would receive the survey right after election day. Each hand-addressed envelope included only the survey instrument with its preprinted cover letter, written by the president of Nazarene Theological Seminary Ron Benefiel. In the absence of a pastor due to relocation (118 out of 1200), the survey probably went to the chairman of the board and may have been held for the new pastor. The second wave was mailed on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

The response rate was 51.1% (n=602) for completed surveys, a reasonable rate for a mail survey. Of the 598 not completed, three pastors returned them refusing to participate in the study, one was inadvertently sent to the US mailing address of a church in Canada, and 21 went to churches which were temporarily without a pastor.

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## II. Findings

### A. Personal and political characteristics

The Nazarene pastors we surveyed are overwhelmingly white (93%) and male (97%). They tend to be married (98%) and middle-aged (both the mean and median are 50 years of age). They are fairly well-educated: only 23.5% have obtained less than a college degree, with 32% indicating that they have a bachelor's degree and an impressive 44.6% having gone on to do some post-graduate work. Of those who are seminary graduates, most pursued theological education within their own tradition; nearly 82% of them were educated at the denomination's own Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

On average, they have been in the ministry for 20 years (with quite a wide range of service among respondents, from less than one year to 60 years). Nazarene ministers tend to move from church to church fairly frequently, given the high degree of local church autonomy; the pastors in our survey have served their present congregations for an average of six and a half years. A few have served the same church for up to 38 years, skewing the mean upward. The median length of service is a mere 4 years, and most pastors (80%) have been in their present churches for ten years or less.

Their congregations are located mainly in rural areas or small towns (62.8% indicate they live in communities of 50,000 people or less), which is not surprising given the historical development of the denomination. And most congregations tend to be rather small. The average number of worshippers reported on Sunday mornings was 135, but again, this mean was skewed by the presence of a few very large churches; five pastors reported attendance of 1000 or more. This is atypical of Nazarene congregations; perhaps a better measure of church size is the median attendance of 80 persons on a normal Sunday.

Finally, a sizable number of pastors characterize their congregations as primarily working class (40%) rather than middle class (32%, with the rest denoting their churches as "mixed" in class status), which fits with previous findings about the blue-collar nature of the denomination.

(Table 1 here)

Nazarene ministers are very interested in politics. Nearly all of them report being more than "mildly interested" in politics and in the 2000 campaign, and over three-quarters said they paid a lot of attention to news reports about the campaign. Not only do they eagerly follow what is happening on the political scene; a majority would like to see the Nazarene church get more involved in social and political issues. Accounts of the denomination in earlier times give the impression that Nazarenes, like many evangelicals, were fairly disengaged from civic life, focusing more on individual soul-winning and the life hereafter than on the political process and earthly concerns. Without longitudinal data, we cannot be sure just how and when the shift to greater political engagement occurred; perhaps it is linked to the rise of the Christian Right in the 1980s, when evangelicals as a whole became more energized about social and political issues. Certainly today's Nazarene clergy seem very interested in political events and a majority (52.3%) report that they would like get even more involved in this realm. They do display a certain naiveté about politics, though. More than one-third of them believe there is a single "Christian" position on political issues, and almost none (only 12%) acknowledge the necessity of compromise in the political process, preferring to "stick to one's principles at the risk of achieving little" (65%).

Many Nazarene clergy put their interest in politics into practice in 2000. We asked these pastors what they had done to participate in politics during the election year. The ten political activities most often participated in during 2000 are listed in Table 2.

(Table 2 here)

By far the most popular activity in 2000 was urging parishioners to register and vote. This is perhaps not surprising, given that voting is the most common and least costly (in terms of time and effort) form of political participation in the U.S. It indicates that ministers are taking deliberate steps to encourage their congregations to view good citizenship as part of being a good Christian, rather than withdrawing from the world. Other prevalent activities include praying in public about issues and candidates, preaching about political and social issues, participating in local clergy councils, and publicly taking a stand on candidates and issues. As with the previous table, here we find that acting within their role as pastor is a preferred mode of political activism. The data show that few participated in conventional citizen activities like contributing money, attending political rallies, campaigning or joining political organizations. And only three pastors out of the entire survey reported participating in civil disobedience, the least popular activity of all.

## B. Political Identity and Voting Behavior

The pastors' concern about politics is not evenly distributed across the ideological spectrum; they are a monolithic group, leaning toward the far right in their self-identification of ideology and political partisanship.

(Table 3 here)

Nazarene pastors are overwhelmingly conservative (86.5%); only 10% call themselves moderate, and a mere 3.5% identify themselves as liberal. In fact, most believe that "it is hard to be a true Christian and a liberal" (72%).

They are almost universally Republican in their partisanship (87.8%), and they locate themselves within the staunchest segment of party loyalists: an astonishing 51.7% of Nazarene ministers chose the furthest end of the seven-point party-id scale, "Strong Republican," as the category best describing them. Only 6% of Nazarene ministers identified as Democrats, which is somewhat surprising given the blue-collar, low socio-economic status of the denomination. However, these evangelicals may be among the "Reagan Democrats" who have realigned over the past thirty years over moral, racial, and other issues. In the year 2000, they were solidly in the Republican camp.

Nazarene pastors have had a strong presence turning out at the polls, and they have not defected from their partisan identification in the past two presidential elections. Ninety-four percent of them voted in 1996, and that rate went slightly higher to 96.6% in 2000. They voted overwhelmingly for Bob Dole in 1996 (84.8%), and almost unanimously for George W. Bush in the general election in 2000 (93.6%).

Many of these ministers were involved in the presidential campaign early on; two-thirds participated in the primaries and caucuses. A few (14.3%) reported being "active supporters" of a candidate during the nomination process (by putting up a yard sign, wearing a campaign button,

or attending rallies). Of these, nearly all (90.5%) were active campaigners for George W. Bush. Clearly, Republican candidates can rely on the solid support of Nazarene pastors in national election campaigns.

### C. Interest Group Affinities

Most organizations outside of the church itself do not seem to hold much interest for these clergy. Table 4 lists the aggregate means for how close they feel to a variety of interest groups, many of them religious. (Means were calculated from respondents' scores on a range from 1 = very close to 5 = very far, with 3 = neutral.)

(Table 4 here)

Only a handful of groups received a positive score. By far, these pastors feel the closest affinity to Focus on the Family. In fact, nearly 44% of them chose the “very close” category to describe their feelings; this was the only group to have more than ten percent of the ministers place themselves in that most enthusiastic category. The extreme popularity of Focus on the Family can perhaps be partly explained by its leadership. Dr. James Dobson, its head, grew up in the Nazarene church, graduated from a Nazarene College, and maintains close ties to the denomination. He is obviously a trusted and admired “favorite son,” and the issues this group champions are the ones that, as we saw in Table 5, resonate strongly with these ministers.

A few other groups – mostly those connected to the religious right or the evangelical mainstream – are rated positively, but only slightly. The Christian Coalition, Prison Fellowship, the American Family Association, and the National Association for Evangelicals all receive lukewarm support, with means between 2.6 and 3. The pastors were ambivalent about Habitat for Humanity (2.9), a group with explicitly Christian roots but not identified as strictly evangelical. Our guess is that Nazarene clergy approve of Habitat's mission to help the poor in a grass roots way, on a case-by-case basis and without governmental involvement. However, the group's focus on affordable housing as its central concern may fall too far outside the scope of individual problems and sins that these ministers are most compelled to take action on, edging too close to (implicit) systemic critique for them to embrace this cause with real fervor.

A few groups elicited a wide variety of reactions, both warm and cool. About a third of ministers feel close to the NRA and other pro-gun rights groups, while 40% are distant. A quarter are close to the “Christian Right,” while 35% feel neutral and 39% feel far. They are also split in their support for Operation Rescue: Twenty-two percent express affinity, 35% distance themselves, and a full 43% say they are neutral. This surprised us a bit, given the strong pro-life sentiments we found throughout the survey, but perhaps it can be explained by the activism preferences discussed earlier. These ministers seem more comfortable with conventional activism than with more extreme varieties of protest, and with expressing “moral” stances but not necessarily politicizing them through direct interest group activity. The radical, even violent, reputation of Operation Rescue may turn off these more moderate Wesleyans, even though they agree with their pro-life position.

Groups identified with religious or political “liberalism” are disliked by almost all of these pastors. Seventy-four percent or more express feeling far from the NAACP, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, the National Council of Churches, environmental groups,

and women's rights groups. Gay rights groups and the ACLU are the most shunned, with over 92% of Nazarene ministers reporting distance from them.

#### D. Policy Positions

When asked about their policy preferences on a wide range of social and political issues, Nazarene pastors display a consistently conservative worldview. As Table 5 shows, most believe that government is too big (64%). They see little need for affirmative action (22%), national health insurance (24%), or women's rights legislation (15%). They support school vouchers (62%), capital punishment (72%), teaching creationism (83%), and welfare reform (58%), while opposing gun control (71%).

(Table 5 here)

The issues that seem to really touch a nerve with these clergy are sexuality and abortion. Ninety-five percent believe that sex education in public schools should be abstinence-based, with an astounding 63.6% *strongly* agreeing with that statement. They are also emphatic about the need for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, with 88.6% agreeing and 56.4% taking the strongest possible stance in favor. (A smaller majority, 51%, also oppose civil rights for gays.) These energetic responses make sense in light of the Holiness theology that stresses purity of heart, mind and activity. These are issues that deal with individual choices and behavior, not reforming institutions, and which tap directly into the concept of purity and holy living. Thus these are the policy issues that these clergy seem to be most concerned with and on which they have the greatest certainty about their positions.

#### E. Theological Beliefs

Pastors in the Nazarene church hold very orthodox views on theological questions, which is what we would expect from members of a conservative evangelical denomination. They are nearly unanimous in their belief in the virgin birth (98.6%), the existence of the Devil (97.6%), the second coming (98.3%) and salvation only through Jesus Christ (96.8%). They are also quite united in their opposition to homosexual clergy (97.4%), evolutionary theory (93.1%), and both feminist (76.9%) and liberation theology (55.6%).

(Table 6 here)

Their Wesleyan beliefs may be somewhat evident in their less emphatic agreement with the Biblical literalism question. Only 61% *strongly* agree that the Bible is completely inerrant. And 79.2% reject a fundamentalist reading of Scripture that prohibits women from positions of church leadership and ordination. Still, a majority of Nazarene pastors agree with the many statements tapping into the Bible's historical veracity, reflecting the degree to which fundamentalism may have begun to overshadow more traditional Wesleyan ideology of "plenary inspiration."

Nazarene ministers also overwhelmingly agree (92.8%) that the church should stress individual sanctification more than transforming the social order, which is not surprising since personal “heart holiness” is a mainstay of the tradition. However, further analysis of questions juxtaposing social and individual morality may yield somewhat more complex responses, given Nazarenes’ historical pattern of taking stands against certain social ills. While rooted in the idea of personal cleansing, Nazarenes have historically seen sanctification as the beginning of a process that transforms the individual and then leads to social change as that individual rejects worldly evils and seeks to serve others. Thus Nazarenes have taken strong positions for temperance and against gambling, in part because of the social consequences of these activities, such as poverty and familial breakdown. Thus the emphasis on individual sanctification may come not at the expense of social transformation, but as a necessary precursor to it in the minds of these Nazarene clergy. Nearly two-thirds of them agree that “if enough people were brought to Christ, social issues would take care of themselves.” And there is further evidence that they seek to balance personal salvation with social transformation: almost 55% agree that “social justice is at the heart of the Gospel.”

### G. Sources of Information

To feed their appetite for information about political issues and events, Nazarene pastors rely on a wide variety of news sources. Table 7 displays the percentage of clergy that report *frequent* use of each type of media. The most popular sources of information are newspapers and network TV newscasts, which is not surprising since they are widely disseminated and geared toward a mass audience. More Americans get their news from television than from any other source, Nazarene ministers included.

(Table 7 here)

While pastors get information from many different sources, including family & friends and several types of secular media, a significant proportion also rely on explicitly Christian news outlets. Christian radio is especially popular, with over a third of pastors reporting using it “a lot,” but a fair number also consume news from Christian magazines and television. Since the priming and framing effects of news coverage political attitudes has been well-documented, we wondered if frequent exposure to Christian news sources would have a measurable influence on audience members’ political issue positions. We selected out all members of our sample who used either Christian radio, TV or magazines “a lot” of the time and compared them to the rest of the sample on several policy areas.

(Table 8 here)

About 45% of our sample reported getting news frequently from at least one source of Christian media (n=264). Clergy who often use Christian media are even more conservative in their policy preferences than other Nazarene pastors. They are substantially more likely to favor school vouchers, prayer in schools, capital punishment, and protecting the rights of gun owners. Slightly more of the Christian media consumers also favor teaching creationism and outlawing abortion. Of course, a majority of all the pastors in our study take these issues positions; but those who get much of their information from Christian media are substantially more likely to agree with them than those who do not. Given that the issues on which we found differences are ones that are often focused on by Christian news sources, it seems plausible to hypothesize that indeed there is some media effect at work here. Interestingly, the frequent Christian news watchers are even more efficacious about their ability to influence the political beliefs of their congregation members.

## H. Gender Issues: Views of Men and Women Clergy

One hallmark of this denomination has been the affirmation of women in all leadership roles, including preaching and pasturing, since its founding. However, women make up a very small percentage of pastors in our study (n=20). Though in practice the number of women in pastoral roles has been shrinking since the 1920s (when women made up about a third of Nazarene clergy), the doctrine allowing women access to ordained ministry remains virtually unchallenged. Because their more progressive views toward women in ministry make Nazarenes somewhat unusual when compared with most other conservative, evangelical denominations, we thought it would be interesting to look at the political attitudes and activities of the women ministers who responded to our survey. Would they express conservative theological and political opinions, or would they lean in a more feminist direction?

Though it is difficult to generalize from such a small sub-sample, we did find that women pastors had generally similar spiritual and political beliefs. Rather than expressing significantly more liberal opinions than their male counterparts, women were just as orthodox on the theological issues and just as conservative in their political attitudes as the men – in fact, sometimes even further to the right. Women exhibited about the same interest in politics, identified as Republicans at a similar rate, were slightly more likely to call themselves “conservatives,” and affirmed a literal interpretation of the Bible even more strongly than the men. On public policy issues, there were no striking gender differences. While this might seem surprising, given the well-documented “gender gap” in partisanship and policy preferences in the U.S. over the past 20 years, we believe the absence of gender differences can primarily be explained by the tiny number of women in the clergy pool. Lacking a critical mass, the women who do make it into the pastorate in this denomination (instead of giving up on their “call” or leaving it for a more gender-balanced denominational context) have probably assimilated to the prevailing political and theological norms.

The one area in which we do find some interesting variation between men and women is specific questions regarding women’s rights.

(Table 9 here)

While their views are not diametrically opposed, Table 9 demonstrates that women clergy do seem significantly more concerned about discrimination against women. Over a third of women pastors see a need for more legislation protecting women’s rights, compared to a mere 14% of men. Even more interestingly, nearly 37% of women pastors feel personally disadvantaged by their gender when it comes to moving up the career ladder in the denomination. While they disavow feminist interest groups and theology, these women pastors clearly have some sense that the vestiges of sex discrimination still remain, at least in their workplace. Perhaps this perception comes from the context in which they minister. Women have less seniority in the ministry than the men (median 8 years, compared to a median 19 for men), and they serve significantly smaller churches (median attendance of 28 people in Sunday morning worship, versus 80 for men).

Finally, although nearly all Nazarene pastors support all clergy positions being open to women (as noted earlier), we find 75% of the women *strongly* agree with that statement, while only 35% of men give their wholehearted assent. In fact, 21.4% of men have some doubts about this position. Though this represents the thinking of just a small fraction of ministers, we wonder about the implications of this eroded support for women clergy. Is this perhaps more evidence of the growing influence of fundamentalism? Might it signal the beginning of a change in

denominational attitudes toward women and ministry, or is it simply aberrant thinking on the part of a few clergy? We are interested to watch this issue and explore it further.

#### J. Comparisons with “fundamentalist” and “evangelical” denominations

As data from other denominations in the 2000 clergy study became available, we were interested to see if Nazarene pastors resembled ministers from more fundamentalist denominations, or if they retained Wesleyan distinctiveness. Appendices 1- 6 show Nazarenes’ responses in comparison with seven other evangelical denominations in the survey (Presbyterian Church in America, Evangelical Free, Assemblies of God, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Southern Baptists, Christian Reformed Church, and Mennonites).

In general, Nazarene ministers look remarkably similar to their evangelical counterparts. To compare the theological underpinnings of their political views, we created two indexes. The five-item “orthodoxy” index taps answers to questions on the historical reality of Adam and Eve, virgin birth, existence of the Devil, Biblical inerrancy, and sole route to salvation through Jesus. The three-item “fundamentalism” index taps issues close to the heart of the fundamentalist tradition in America: evolution, the Second Coming, and religious ecumenicalism. On both of these measures, the PCA and EV Free are most conservative. Mennonites and CRC pastors are most heterodox and non-fundamentalist, followed by the Nazarenes. (The ordering of the denominations on these indexes is reflected in their placement in the tables of Appendices 1 – 6.) In particular, Nazarenes are less likely to embrace Biblical literalism than their more fundamentalist counterparts. As seen in Appendix 6, they are also slightly more sacramental than the other denominations (except LCMS), and less critical of liberation and feminist theology than the fundamentalists. One Wesleyan distinctive does stand out: Nazarenes are the only denomination except the Mennonites to have a majority of their clergy agree that “social justice is at the heart of the gospel” (54.2%). Most of the fundamentalists disagree overwhelmingly (65-86%) with that statement. One surprising finding is that while all of the other conservative denominations take a strongly pro-Israel stance, in the PCA, most fundamentalist of all, only 13.3% support Israel.

Nazarenes are most likely to desire their denomination to become more politically involved (nearly 60% -- other denominations were generally at about 45%). They are about as politically active as the other ministers, and they closely resemble their more fundamentalist counterparts in political ideology, partisanship, and 2000 vote choice. All were overwhelmingly conservative, Republican Bush voters. In terms of issue positions, Nazarenes are slightly less supportive of capital punishment, and the group *most* in favor of constitutionally banning abortion (though all denominations except the Mennonites favor this very strongly as well). They are slightly less supportive of “harsh” new welfare reform. Interestingly, when asked about a constitutional amendment permitting prayer in school, some of the most staunchly “fundamentalist” denominations seem to have given up on the efficacy of that battle. While a majority of Nazarenes still support it, few in the PCA, EV Free, and LCMS are in favor of that policy change.

In terms of gender – a key issue for fundamentalists – Nazarenes are the most supportive of women clergy (79%), though the Assemblies of God are similar. Opposition to women in pastoral roles ranges from near unanimous in the PCA (98%), to overwhelming in the EV Free

(90%), LCMS (83%), and Southern Baptist Convention (72%), to about a quarter of the sample for CRC and Mennonites. Nazarenes are by far the least likely to oppose the idea of women clergy (only 9%).

## I. Conclusion

Nazarene clergy possess a holiness theology that is both inward- and outward-looking, calling them to link personal purity and orthodoxy with radical social transformation. How do they translate this perspective into 21<sup>st</sup> century American politics? They have stayed true to their theological conservative heritage by holding to highly orthodox views on theological questions. They believe in a literal virgin birth, the devil, and the second coming of Christ. However, they differ from the fundamentalists on significant issues such as the role of women in church leadership, with a vast majority agreeing that all clergy positions should be open to women. They also refuse to choose between individual and social transformation, insisting that both are necessary. While they agree that individual sanctification should never be downplayed at the expense of social change, they view social justice as an inherent part of the Gospel; social holiness will be the fruit borne of personal holiness.

However, Nazarene ministers have adopted an individualistic and somewhat absolutist approach to political issues. They oppose more government intervention into poverty, education, and healthcare, preferring private or personal solutions to such problems. Instead, the issues that unite and energize them are issues of sexual morality and “family values.” They are strongly in favor of abstinence-based sex education and a constitutional ban on abortion, but overwhelmingly opposed to gay rights. Most believe there is a “Christian” position on such issues, and nearly 90% see little need for compromising that position in the political process. For the most part, they see the political world in fairly stark terms, where evil is easy to identify and good can be advocated for without question.

While they may have been disengaged from politics in earlier times, focusing more on “soul-winning” than winning election campaigns, today’s Nazarene ministers are quite interested in politics and have a great deal of trust in the American political process. In the 2000 election campaign, Nazarene clergy were politically active from the pulpit, socializing their congregations by praying about issues and candidates and urging them to vote. They paid a great deal of attention to news about the campaign; interestingly, many of them relied on religious media for much of their news (45%). Those who reported using Christian radio, television and magazines “a lot” were more conservative in their policy preferences than other Nazarene pastors, and even more efficacious about their ability to influence their churches politically.

Nazarene clergy are monolithic in their ideological and partisan preferences. Nearly all define themselves as conservative and Republican, with a majority choosing the strongest possible identification with the GOP. This identification was borne out at the polls in 2000, with 90% voting for George W. Bush for president.

Nazarene ministers’ orthodox theological stances and socially conservative politics seem to have been influenced by Christian media, as well as the larger evangelical subculture. The Holiness distinctiveness and socio-demographic background that might push the Nazarene clergy toward more liberal or communitarian positions seem, at this moment, to be overshadowed by individualistic and fundamentalist influences.

**Table 1**  
Nazarene Clergy Interest Levels

<i>Do you think your denomination needs to be more or less involved in social and political issues?</i>	MORE INVOLVED	15.1%
		19.0%
		25.0%
	SAME AS NOW	33.9%
		3.7%
		2.3%
	LESS INVOLVED	1.0%

**Table 2**  
Nazarene Clergy Participation  
(top 10 activities)

	Participated In 2000
Urged your congregation to register and vote	76.3%
Prayed publicly about an issue	64.9%
Publicly (not preaching) took a stand on some public issue	55.4%
Touched on, but did not deal mainly with, a controversial social or political issue in a sermon	53.7%
Prayed publicly for political candidates	51.5%
Actively participated in a local clergy council	50.0%
Publicly (not preaching) supported a political candidate	40.2%
Signed or circulated a petition	39.3%
Took a stand from the pulpit on some political issue	38.8%
Contacted a public official about some issue	36.7%

**Table 3**  
Nazarene Clergy Voting Record and Preferences

<i>For which presidential candidate did you vote in 2000, or did you not vote?</i>	Al Gore	5.1%
	George W. Bush	90.3%
	Pat Buchanan	0.2%
	Ralph Nader	0.5%
	Other	0.3%
	Did not vote	3.4%
<i>We hear a lot of talk in politics about liberals and conservatives. How would you classify yourself?</i>	Extremely liberal	0.2
	Very liberal	1.0
	Somewhat liberal	2.3
	Moderate	10.0
	Somewhat conservative	30.3
	Very conservative	49.0
<i>Generally, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or what?</i>	Extremely conservative	7.2
	Strong Democrat	2.4
	Weak Democrat	2.9
	Independent leaning Democrat	1.4
	Independent	5.6
	Independent leaning Republican	17.3
	Weak Republican	18.8
	Strong Republican	51.7

**Table 4**  
Degree of Closeness Of Nazarene Clergy To The Following Groups

	Mean Score 1=Very Close 5=Very Far	N
Focus on the Family	1.7	583
Prison Fellowship	2.6	551
The Christian Coalition	2.8	574
American Family Association	2.8	529
National Association of Evangelicals	2.9	534
Habitat for Humanity	2.9	516
Pro-Gun Rights Group (e.g., NRA)	3.2	538
Call to Renewal	3.3	472
Christian Right	3.3	521
Operation Rescue	3.3	496
Bread for the World	3.4	473
Pax Christi	3.8	428
Catholic Alliance	4.0	466
People for the American Way	4.1	502
NAACP	4.2	531
National Council of Churches	4.3	542
Americans United for Separation of Church and State	4.3	514
Pro-Environment Group (Sierra Club)	4.3	525
Women's Rights Groups (e.g., NOW)	4.5	529
ACLU	4.7	524
Gay Rights Groups (e.g., PFLAG)	4.8	534

**Table 5**  
Nazarene Clergy Views On Social And Political Policies And Problems

	Strongly Agree / Agree	Strongly Disagree / Disagree
Sex education programs included in the curricula of public high schools should be abstinence based.	95.4%	3.0%
We need a constitutional amendment prohibiting all abortions unless to save the mother's life, or in case of rape or incest.	88.6%	6.6%
Overall, religion has a positive effect on American social and civic life.	85.6%	6.3%
Scientific creationism should be taught in biology classes if the theory of evolution is.	83.4%	8.1%
I oppose capital punishment.	13.8%	71.8%
Public policy should discourage ownership and use of handguns.	14.3%	71.0%
Overall, religion has a positive effect on American political life.	68.0%	15.1%
Pastors have a great potential to influence the political beliefs of their congregations	67.8%	10.6%
The U.S. should spend more on the military and defense.	67.7%	9.6%
If enough people were brought to Christ, social issues would take care of themselves.	65.8%	17.6%
Government is providing too many services which should be left to private enterprise.	64.1%	12.7%
The government should provide vouchers to parents to help pay for their children to attend private or religious schools.	61.7%	14.8%
Education policy should focus on improving public schools rather than encouraging alternatives such as private and religious schools.	21.2%	59.2%
Current welfare reform laws are too harsh and hurt children.	11.1%	57.7%
We still need more legislation to protect women's rights.	14.9%	56.3%

Blacks and other minorities may need special government help to achieve an equal place in America.	22.3%	54.2%
We need a constitutional amendment to permit prayer as a regular exercise in schools.	53.2%	28.1%
We need government-sponsored national health insurance so that everyone can get adequate medical care.	24.1%	52.0%
Homosexuals should have all the same rights and privileges as other American citizens.	35.2%	51.0%
The federal government should do more to solve social problems such as unemployment, poverty, and poor housing.	36.8%	43.3%

**Table 6**  
Nazarene Clergy Beliefs

	Strongly Agree / Agree * Strongly Disagree / Disagree
Jesus was born of a virgin.	98.6%
Jesus will return to earth one day.	98.3%
The Devil actually exists.	97.6%
All clergy positions should be open to practicing homosexuals.	*97.4%
There is no other way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ.	96.8%
All the great religions of the world are equally good and true.	*96.3%
Evolution is the best explanation for the origins of life on earth.	*93.1%
The church should put less emphasis on individual sanctification and more on transforming the social order.	*92.8%
Adam and Eve were real historical persons.	92.0%
The sacraments of the church are necessary for salvation.	*86.6%
The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, both in matters of faith and in historic, geographical and other secular matters.	81.0%
All clergy positions should be open to women.	79.2%
Feminist theology provides valuable insights about being a Christian.	*76.9%
Modern-day Israel is a special nation blessed by God.	66.8%

Many of the ideas in “liberation theology” really get at the heart of the Gospel.	*55.8%
Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel.	54.2%

**Table 7**

## Nazarene Clergy Sources of Information About Government and Politics

	“A Lot”
Network TV news	43.4%
Newspapers	39.9%
Family/friends	30.9%
Public radio	19.0%
Public TV	18.9%
Commercial radio	18.1%
News magazines	16.7%
Direct mail	7.1%
Opinion magazines	2.7%
Christian radio	36.5%
Christian magazines	20.7%
Christian TV	13.0%

**Table 8**  
 Cross Tabulation of  
 Nazarene Clergy Views On Social And Political Policies And Problems  
 And  
 Sources of Information About Government and Politics

	Not a lot of Information from Christian Sources		A lot of information from Christian Sources	
	SA/A	SD/D	SA/A	SD/D
The government should provide vouchers to parents to help pay for their children to attend private or religious schools.	54.4%		71.0%	
We need a constitutional amendment to permit prayer as a regular exercise in schools.	48.0%		59.8%	
I oppose capital punishment.		*67.1%		*77.7%
Public policy should discourage ownership and use of handguns.		*66.6%		*76.5%
Education policy should focus on improving public schools rather than encouraging alternatives such as private and religious schools.		*55.1%		*64.4%
Pastors have a great potential to influence the political beliefs of their congregations	64.1%		72.3%	
Scientific creationism should be taught in biology classes if the theory of evolution is.	80.5%		87.0%	
We need a constitutional amendment prohibiting all abortions unless to save the mother's life, or in case of rape or incest.	85.8%		92.0%	
China should not have been given most favored nation trading status until it stops religious persecution.	83.0%		88.3%	
The U.S. should spend more on the military and defense.	66.4%		69.4%	

**Table 9**  
 Cross Tabulation of  
 Nazarene Clergy Views On Women's Rights  
 And  
 Gender

	Strongly Agree / Agree	
	Female	Male
We still need more legislation to protect women's rights.	35.0%	14.1%
All clergy positions should be open to women.	95.0%	78.6%
My gender puts me at a disadvantage when it comes to upward mobility in my denomination.	36.8%	5.1%

**Table 1**  
Clergy Interest Levels

<i>Do you think your denomination needs to be more or less involved in social and political issues?</i>				Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)						
MORE INVOLVED	9.1%	2.4%	10.8%	5.4%	15.1%	15.1%	6.2%	6.0%	9.2%
	13.7%	5.9%	15.9%	13.0%	13.1%	19.0%	9.5%	14.1%	13.6%
	20.3%	17.8%	26.0%	26.6%	16.9%	25.0%	26.9%	25.7%	23.5%
SAME AS NOW	46.1%	68.8%	42.5%	46.7%	31.4%	33.9%	47.7%	42.5%	43.3%
	4.2%	3.2%	3.3%	4.6%	8.9%	3.7%	4.6%	6.2%	4.9%
	2.9%	1.6%	0.9%	2.2%	5.8%	2.3%	3.1%	3.0%	2.8%
LESS INVOLVED	3.8%	0.4%	0.6%	1.5%	8.7%	1.0%	2.1%	2.4%	2.6%
N	453	253	334	647	449	601	390	369	3496

**Table 2**  
Clergy Participation  
(Sorted By Top 10 Nazarene Activities)

	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
Urged your congregation to register and vote	58.6	67.9	52.4	59.2	60.7	55.1	18.5	53.8
Prayed publicly about an issue	56.2	61.6	49.4	48.6	51.7	67.3	49.6	54.2
Publicly (not preaching) took a stand on some public issue	47.1	53.3	38.4	47.9	44.1	44.2	33.0	43.6
Touched on, but did not deal mainly with, a controversial social or political issue in a sermon	47.4	53.4	42.9	46.4	42.8	51.3	40.0	45.8
Prayed publicly for political candidates	40.6	55.2	32.0	38.2	41.0	53.4	30.0	40.5
Actively participated in a local clergy council	27.9	46.1	29.1	34.2	39.8	44.9	45.5	37.2
Publicly (not preaching) supported a political candidate	33.5	45.1	25.2	34.7	32.1	29.3	16.1	30.5
Signed or circulated a petition	30.1	47.6	31.1	29.6	31.4	45.2	38.4	35.1
Took a stand from the pulpit on some political issue	40.5	43.6	21.5	38.2	30.9	25.5	19.3	30.8
Contacted a public official about some issue	33.6	36.0	32.9	34.0	29.3	32.6	27.0	32.1

Questions not asked of Evangelical Free clergy.

**Table 3**  
Clergy Voting Record and Preferences

<i>We hear a lot of talk in politics about liberals and conservatives. How would you classify yourself?</i>	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
	Extremely liberal						0.2	0.2	1.6
Very liberal	0.2		0.6	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.8	7.9	1.6
Somewhat liberal	1.1	0.4	0.3	5.6	2.0	2.3	14.8	30.2	6.7
Moderate	2.8	2.3	6.3	8.9	9.6	10.0	20.9	16.9	9.8
Somewhat conservative	17.9	34.5	23.6	29.5	17.7	30.3	40.7	25.1	27.2
Very conservative	58.6	58.5	58.2	49.8	52.0	49.0	21.6	17.4	46.0
Extremely conservative	19.4	4.3	11.0	5.1	17.3	7.2	0.3	0.8	8.4

  

<i>Generally, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or what?</i>	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
	Strong Democrat	0.2		1.9	3.9	5.3	2.4	3.1	8.1
Weak Democrat	0.7		1.6	1.7	4.8	2.9	4.1	13.3	3.5
Independent leaning Democrat	1.1	0.4	1.9	3.3	3.4	1.4	8.9	21.9	4.9
Independent	7.2	2.7	6.2	6.3	6.2	5.6	8.4	14.4	7.1
Independent leaning Republican	13.7	17.5	15.0	18.7	17.8	17.3	22.2	15.6	17.3
Weak Republican	18.5	28.0	23.1	18.3	13.0	18.8	25.8	13.6	19.3
Strong Republican	58.7	51.4	50.5	47.8	49.5	51.7	27.6	13.1	44.7

**Table 3**  
Clergy Voting Record and Preferences

<i>For which presidential candidate did you vote in 2000, or did you not vote?</i>	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite		
Gore	0.2		2.8	8.2	10.8	5.1	11.2	30.4		8.6
Bush	92.7	98.0	91.4	86.9	87.4	90.4	78.6	36.9		83.3
Buchanan	0.2		0.3	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3		0.3
Nader	0.7			0.8	0.2	0.5	2.0	11.1		1.8
Other	3.5	0.4	0.3	0.9		0.3	0.5	0.3		0.8
Did not vote	2.6	1.6	5.2	2.7	1.3	3.4	7.4	21.1		5.3

**Table 4**  
Degree of Closeness Of Clergy To The Following Groups  
(Sorted By Nazarene Means)

<i>Mean Score</i> <i>1=Very Close</i> <i>5=Very Far</i>	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
Focus on Family	2.2	1.9	1.9	2.6	2.1	1.7	2.5	3.1	2.2
Prison Fellowship	2.3	1.9	2.4	3.0	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.7	2.5
Christian Coalition	3.0	2.8	2.6	3.6	2.9	2.8	3.4	4.0	3.2
American Family Association	2.7	2.8	2.7	3.1	2.7	2.8	3.3	3.7	3.0
National Association of Evangelicals	2.9	2.2	2.7	4.0	3.5	2.9	2.6	3.2	3.1
Habitat for Humanity	2.8	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.1	2.0	2.6
Pro-gun rights group	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.2	3.2	4.2	4.6	3.5
Call to Renewal	3.6	3.2	3.3	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.5
Christian Right	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.9	3.2	3.3	3.8	4.3	3.5
Operation Rescue	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.4
Bread for the World	3.5	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	2.5	2.7	3.2
Pax Christi	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.2	3.7
Catholic Alliance	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.1
People for the American Way	4.8	4.6	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3
NAACP	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.7	3.3	4.1
National Council of Churches	4.9	4.8	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	3.9	3.6	4.3
Americans United for Separation of C & S	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.0	4.4
Pro-environmental groups	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3	3.7	3.4	4.2
Women's rights groups	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.6
ACLU	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.2	4.7
Gay Rights groups	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.2	4.8

**Table 5**  
Clergy Views On Social And Political Policies And Problems

(Cells 15% or less not shown)	Strongly Agree /Agree	Strongly Disagree /Disagree	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
Sex ed programs should be abstinence based	94.1	96.5	96.7	93.0	94.8	95.4	91.8	86.6	93.6		
Need const amend prohibiting abortions	83.7	84.6	86.6	74.2 17.5	82.8	88.6	78.1	51.2 28.6	79.0		
Creationism should be taught if evolution is	88.9	93.1	92.4	85.5	84.0	83.4	69.9 17.3	65.1 20.6	82.7		
Creationism should be taught if evolution is	88.9	93.1	92.4	85.5	84.0	83.4	69.9 17.3	65.1 20.6	82.7		
Oppose capital punishment	92.4	92.3	82.6	84.8	80.8	71.8	24.1 60.3	75.9	18.0 73.3		
Pub policy should discourage ownership of guns	79.5	16.5 72.3	16.1 71.4	26.4 59.9	18.5 72.3	71.0	53.6 30.0	68.8 18.9	27.2 60.3		
US should spend more on the military and defense	70.2	59.2	66.9	56.3 16.1	74.2	67.7	26.3 33.0	81.3	54.9 21.0		
Gov too many services that belong to private enterp	84.3	69.9	64.0	61.9 16.7	66.4 17.0	64.1	45.0 29.7	27.5 49.0	61.1 18.5		
Gov should provide vouchers	72.0	15.4 72.2	72.4	64.6	50.2 30.5	61.7	80.5	43.4 29.2	64.1 17.0		
Policy should improve pub schools than alternatives	84.9	72.9	69.5	18.2 65.0	31.8 54.0	21.2 59.2	17.5 69.2	47.1 32.9	21.2 63.3		
Current welfare reform laws too harsh	71.5	66.9	49.2	66.7	63.0	57.7	50.0	32.6 31.8	58.1		
Need more legislation to protect women's rights	79.2	71.3	57.3	64.9	15.5 59.9	56.3	20.4 44.1	37.4 28.7	58.3		
Minorities may need special gov help to achieve place	18.3 62.7	17.8 55.2	61.5	21.8 58.7	20.9 62.7	22.3 54.2	49.5 28.2	55.6 19.8	26.8 51.5		
Need const amend to permit prayer in schools	25.4 57.0	33.6 45.6	66.8	70.0	50.2 35.4	53.2 28.1	21.7 57.5	25.3 56.4	35.4 46.9		
Need gov health care insurance	77.6	16.2 60.8	31.7 41.4	21.5 56.0	25.4 52.6	24.1 52.0	41.2 32.7	60.5 20.2	27.4 50.3		
Gays should have all the same rights and privileges	37.3 52.2	44.2 43.4	23.1 62.3	36.8 48.0	33.2 58.1	35.2 51.0	54.0 29.6	53.6 32.0	39.1 47.6		

**Table 6**  
Clergy Beliefs

(Cells 10% or less not shown)	Strongly Agree /Agree	Strongly Disagree /Disagree	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	Evangelical Free	Assemblies of God (AG)	Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Southern Baptist Convention (SB)	Nazarene (N)	Christian Reformed Church (CRC)	Mennonite	Total
Jesus was born of a virgin			100.0	100.0	99.1	99.2	99.1	98.6	99.2	88.5	98.1
Jesus will return to earth one day			99.8	100.0	99.1	98.1	98.0	98.3	98.7	94.2	98.3
The Devil actually exists			100.0	100.0	99.1	99.1	98.0	97.6	98.2	87.3	97.6
All clergy positions should be open to practicing homos			99.4	100.0	97.6	97.0	96.9	97.4	95.6	12.4 74.7	95.2
Only way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ			100.0	100.0	98.2	98.3	97.3	96.8	95.9	85.9	96.7
All great religions equally good and true			99.3	99.6	97.3	98.3	98.4	96.3	97.7	91.5	97.3
Evolution is the best explanation for origins of life			97.6	96.9	95.8	95.0	93.3	93.1	84.8	15.2 71.1	91.4
Adam and Ever were real historical persons			99.6	99.6	97.6	94.9	92.8	92.0	90.0	65.9 18.0	91.8
Sacraments of the church are necessary for salvation			92.6	100.0	95.2	51.2 44.5	97.5	86.6	86.3	90.3	13.8 83.3
The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, both in matters			97.8	99.6	95.9	85.7 11.0	87.4 10.6	81.0 12.9	57.5 34.0	56.0 37.1	82.5 13.8
Modern-day Israel special nation blessed by God			13.3 67.8	71.0 13.9	88.7	86.4	68.0 18.9	66.8 15.1	77.8	33.7 48.8	41.0 45.1
Liberation theology gets at heart of the gospel			97.8	90.6	69.5	85.9	70.7	55.8	23.8 58.4	46.4 30.0	11.5 70.4
Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel			24.1 68.1	30.7 64.6	35.3 55.9	10.9 85.5	47.3 46.8	54.2 35.0	49.9 42.9	66.9 22.1	38.5 54.1