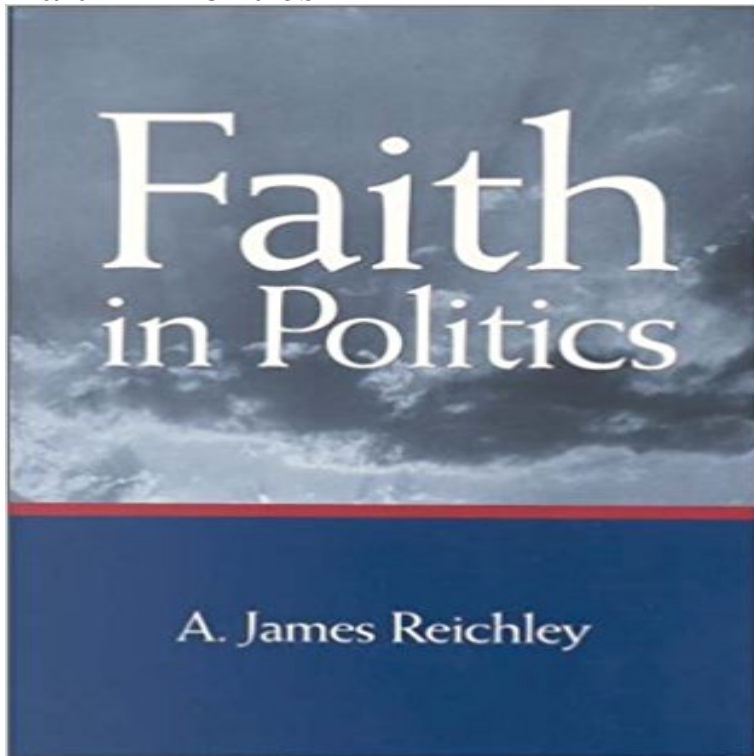


Faith in Politics



According to current polls, about 85 percent of Americans identify with some religious faith and more than 40 percent say they attend religious services at least once a week. In recent years, religious observance and even religious beliefs have become important factors influencing voter choice. Active participation in electoral politics by some religious groups has fueled apprehensions that the traditional separation of church and state may be threatened. A. James Reichley explores the questions and conflicting positions surrounding the relations between government and politics in a new book that draws upon his landmark work, *Religion in American Public Life*. In *Faith in Politics*, Reichley explores the history of religion in American public life, and considers some practical and philosophic questions affecting future participation by religious groups in the formation of public policy. Reichley begins by examining the various attitudes and points of view of strict separationists, liberal social activists, moderate accommodationists, and direct interventionists. He goes on to discuss the way religion and politics relate to each other through a theoretic structure of seven value systems: monism, absolutism, ecstacism, egoism, collectivism, civil humanism, and transcendent idealism. Further chapters examine the trends and constitutional arrangements that developed during the formative years of the American Republic; the evolution of judicial interpretations of the free exercise and establishment clauses; and the history of church involvement in politics from the early years of the Republic to the 2000 election and the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. A chapter covering events and developments from 1986 to 2002 includes accounts of political activism by the African American church, ideological divisions among Roman Catholics, Jewish liberalism and

commitment to Israel, the rise and decline of the religious right, and political differences among mainline Protestants. Finally, Reichley confronts the question of whether a free society depends ultimately on religious values for cohesion and vindication of human rights.

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