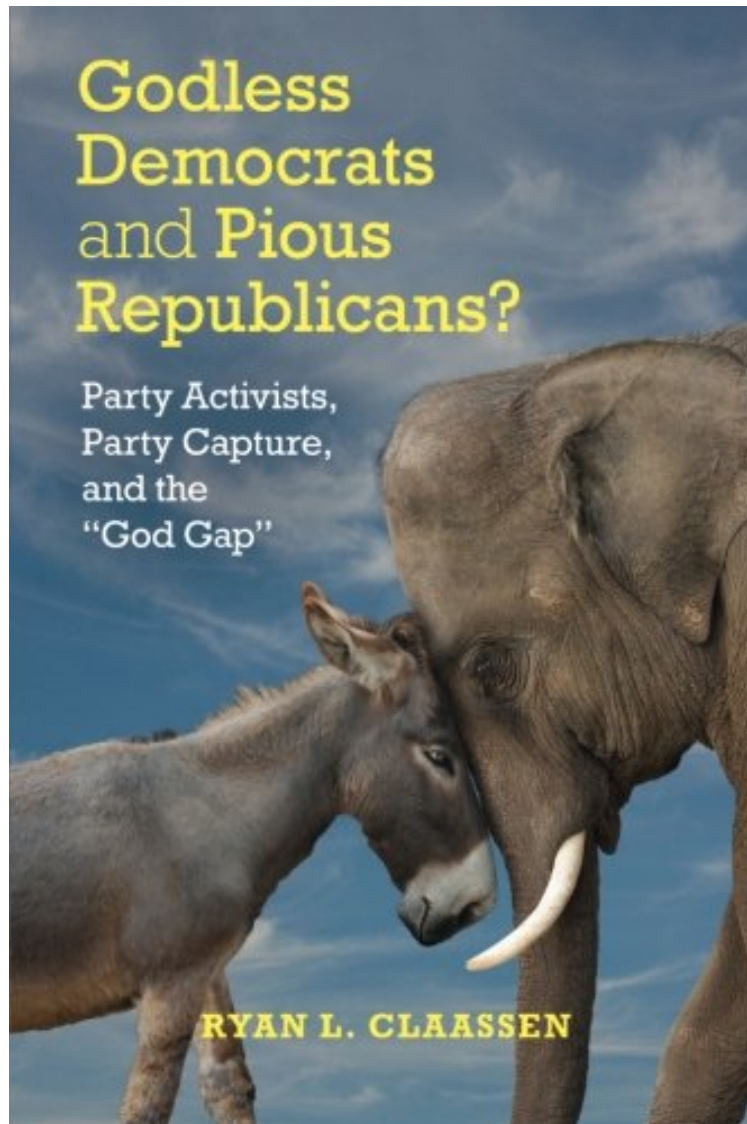


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(Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion and Politics)

## Godless Democrats and Pious Republicans?: Party Activists, Party Capture, and the 'God Gap' (Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion and Politics)

Ryan L. Claassen

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Do Evangelical activists control the Republican Party? Do secular activists control the Democratic Party? In *Godless Democrats and Pious Republicans*, Ryan Claassen carefully assesses the way campaign activists represent religious and non-religious groups in American political parties dating back to the 1960s. By providing a new theoretical framework for investigating the connections between macro social and political trends, the results challenge a conventional wisdom in which recently mobilized religious and Secular extremists captured the parties and created a God gap. The new approach reveals that very basic social and demographic trends matter far more than previously recognized and that mobilization matters far less. The God gap in voting is real, but it was not created by Christian Right mobilization efforts and a Secular backlash. Where others see culture wars and captured parties, Claassen finds many religious divisions in American politics are artifacts of basic social changes. This very basic insight leads to many profoundly different conclusions about the motivations of religious and non-religious activists and voters.

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"Ryan Claassen wants to root out this mythology of the God gap and debunk conspiratorial explanations of its origins ... Claassen finds convincing support for the representation-based approach, rather than the group mobilization perspective." James L. Guth, *The Christian Century*  
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"Ryan Claassen's *Godless Democrats and Pious Republicans?* is a consequential work that serves as an important corrective to the overly simplistic understandings of religion and politics that many of us have accepted over the years ... This is a book that should be on the shelf of every scholar of religion and politics. Moreover, it ought to be in our hands being devoured and digested." Brad Lockerbie, *Public Opinion Quarterly*  
About the Author  
Ryan L. Claassen is Associate Professor of Political Science at Kent State University. His research investigates political engagement - especially the role of engagement shaping the capacity of individuals and groups of individuals in the American public to effectively contribute to public opinion and compete democratically. His work has appeared in *American Politics Research*, the *Journal of Politics*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and *Public Opinion Quarterly*.