

# Faith Digest

November 4, 2010

**Study says more link Christian faith to being American.** As the United States has grown more diverse, more Americans believe being a Christian is a key aspect of being “truly American,” researchers say. [Purdue University](#) scholars found that between 1996 and 2004, Americans who saw Christian identity as a “very important” attribute of being American increased from 38 percent to 49 percent. Scholars said the findings, published in the journal *Sociology of Religion*, couldn’t definitively be tied to a particular event, but they suspect the 9/11 attacks and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could have played a role. The findings are based on an analysis of data from the General Social Survey, collected by the [National Opinion Research Center](#), in which more than 1,000 respondents were queried in 1996 and 2004. In a separate survey, [Public Religion Research Institute](#) found 42 percent believe “America has always been and is currently a Christian nation.”

**Most Protestant pastors nix Obama.** Six out of every 10 Protestant pastors say they disapprove of President Obama’s job performance, a [LifeWay Research](#) survey found. Researchers said of the 61 percent who disapprove of Obama’s work, 47 percent disapprove strongly. The survey found 30 percent of pastors approve of the president’s performance, including 14 percent who strongly approve. Nine percent were undecided. When the Southern Baptist-affiliated research group surveyed Protestant pastors about their voting intentions just before the 2008 elections, 20 percent indicated they planned to vote for Obama, compared to 55 percent who planned to vote for GOP candidate John McCain. The new research was based on interviews with 1,000 Protestant clergy Oct. 7-14 and had an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points. Researchers also found 84 percent of Protestant pastors disagreed with the idea of

pastors endorsing political candidates from the pulpit.

**Stem cell-funding agency apologizes for poem.** The California agency that distributes public funds for stem cell research has apologized for honoring a poem that appropriated language from the Last Supper. The [California Institute for Regenerative Medicine](#) held a poetry contest to promote Stem Cell Awareness Day and draw attention to the complex and controversial field of medical research. When the two winners were announced, some Christian groups protested that one, "Stem C," by Tyson Anderson, was blasphemous. The poem begins, "This is my body/which is given for you," and concludes, "Take this/in remembrance of me," words of Jesus during the Last Supper as recorded in the Gospels and memorialized at Christian worship services during Communion. The California institute, which helps distribute \$3 billion in state funds for stem cell research, said it has removed the poem from its website. While many scientists say embryonic stem cell research holds great medical promise, some Christians call it a wanton destruction of human life because embryos must be destroyed in order to harvest the stem cells.

*-Compiled from Religion News Service*