

Is there really a groundswell of fundamentalist Christianity in Australia, or is this just an illusion created by the smoke and mirrors of political propaganda? Amanda Lohrey sets out to explore and explain the relations between political power and the Christian lobby. She looks at the numbers behind the apparent electoral success of Family First and the Christian right, which is less impressive when shown to be the unintended consequence of preference-manipulating by the major parties.

Although there are behind-the-scenes forces wielding disproportionate influence, Lohrey shows there is no evidence for an increase in overall numbers of churchgoing Christians in the country. Lohrey looks at Hillsong and the Paradise Assembly of God, and at the public statements made by the leaders of the Anglican and Catholic churches, finding a lack of intellectual substance in the former, and political and philosophical naivety and confusion in the latter.

Written from a firmly secular point of view – and as she says, ‘to be secular is not to be anti-religion, but to be anti-theocracy’ – *Voting for Jesus* is a level-headed, well-written and timely essay on a debate which is often conducted in a more intemperate vein.