

Religion & Public Life
A Faith-Based
Partisan Divide



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This report by the **Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life** examines the role of religion in modern American politics. By far the most powerful new reality at the intersection of religion and politics is this: Americans who regularly attend worship services and hold traditional religious views increasingly vote Republican, while those who are less connected to religious institutions and more secular in their outlook tend to vote Democratic. This report explores the trends underlying this growing "faith-based partisan divide." The report also includes a political and demographic profile of major religious groups in the United States, with comparisons with the population as a whole.

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Religion & Public Life

A Faith-Based Partisan Divide

The United States has a long tradition of separating church from state, but an equally powerful inclination to mix religion with politics. Throughout our nation's history, great political and social movements — from abolition to women's suffrage to civil rights to today's struggles over abortion and gay marriage — have drawn upon religious institutions for moral authority, inspirational leadership and organizational muscle. But for the past generation, religion has come to be woven more deeply into the fabric of partisan politics than ever before.

The 2004 election was the latest in a string of modern presidential campaigns in which candidates openly discussed their religious beliefs, churches were increasingly active in political mobilization, and voters sorted themselves out not just by their policy preferences and demographic traits but also by the depth of their religious commitment. In fact, whether a person regularly attends church (or synagogue or mosque) was more important in determining his or her vote for president than such demographic characteristics as gender, age, income and region, and just as important as race. This chapter tracks and analyzes these underlying trends.

The Church Attendance Gap

By far the most powerful new reality at the intersection of religion and politics is this: Americans who regularly attend worship services and hold traditional religious views increasingly vote Republican, while those who are less connected to religious institutions and more secular in their outlook tend to vote Democratic. This is becoming such a familiar dividing line in modern politics that it is easy to overlook how unusual it is from a historical perspective for a majority of the most religiously engaged voters to gravitate toward one party while a majority of the most secular gravitate toward the other.

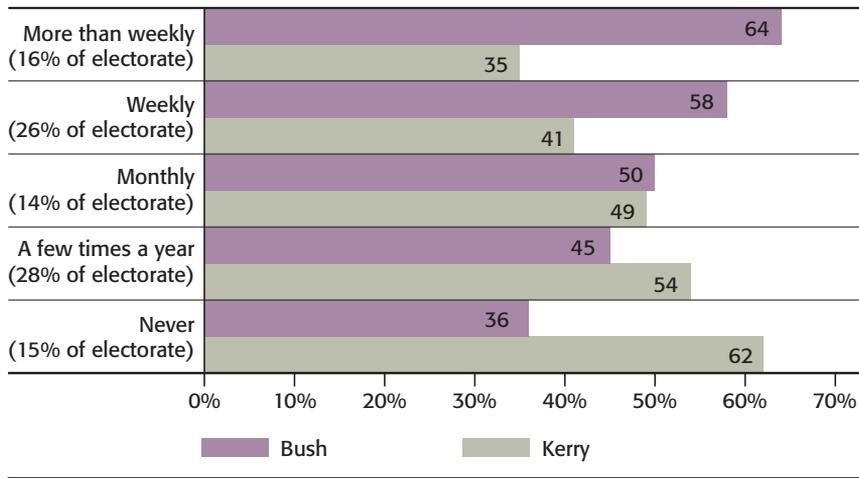
Journalists and pundits have taken to calling this phenomenon the “God Gap” or the “God Gulf.” Although catchy, these terms are misnomers, since the vast majority of support for Democratic as well as Republican candidates comes from people who believe in God and consider themselves religious. What has occurred in recent elections is better described as a “church attendance gap” because it is closely tied to levels of religious engagement, notably church (or synagogue or mosque) attendance and theological orthodoxy.

This divide was very much in evidence in the 2004 presidential election. Voters who attend church more than once a week (an estimated 16% of the electorate) supported President George W. Bush over Sen. John Kerry by a margin of 64% to 35%, according to the National Election Pool, the exit poll that was conducted for a consortium of major news organizations. Among those attending a house of worship once a week (26% of all voters), the margin was 58% to 41% in Bush’s favor. The candidates were virtually dead even (Bush 50%, Kerry 49%) among monthly church attendees (14% of the electorate), and among the 28% of voters who attend church a few times a year, Kerry had the advantage by a margin of 54% to 45%. The senator’s lead was widest among the estimated 15% of the electorate that never attends worship services; Kerry pulled 62% of that group, compared with 36% for Bush.

“Americans who regularly attend worship services and hold traditional religious views increasingly vote Republican, while those who are less connected to religious institutions and more secular in their outlook tend to vote Democratic.”

The Religious Divide in the 2004 Election

Voters who attend church regularly (at least once a month) were more likely to vote for President Bush, while those who seldom or never attend religious services voted heavily Democratic.



Source: National Election Pool

The correlation between church attendance and voting preference is not the only way to look at this divide. One can also analyze political preferences through the lens of religious orthodoxy, as we did in a spring 2004 “American Religious Landscape and Politics Survey,” sponsored by the Pew Forum and conducted by Prof. John Green of the University of Akron. This survey took the nation’s three largest faith traditions — White Evangelical Protestant, White Roman Catholic and Mainline Protestant — and subdivided each into three subgroups: traditionalists, centrists and modernists. Traditionalists are those with the most orthodox theological beliefs within their respective traditions (based, for example, on their interpretation of the Bible or church doctrine) as well as the highest level of religious engagement. They also tend to take conservative stands on a host of cultural and public policy issues, from abortion to gay marriage. Modernists, on the other hand, are the least orthodox in belief and least involved with religious institutions. They also tend to be liberal on most policy issues. Centrists are somewhere in between, both in terms of level of religious engagement and political orientation.

This more nuanced breakdown generates much the same pattern in partisan affiliation and policy outlook as does the church attendance gap. Together, both analyses affirm that the important political fault lines in the American religious landscape do not run along denominational lines, but cut across them. That is, they are defined by religious outlook rather than denominational labels. For instance, traditionalist Catholics are closer to traditionalist Evangelicals than to modernist Catholics in their views on issues such as abortion or embryonic stem cell research. The survey also found that traditionalists in all three major faith groups overwhelmingly identify with the Republican Party – and that traditionalist Evangelicals do so by a 70% to 20% margin. The margins among Mainline Protestant and Catholic traditionalists are less lopsided but nonetheless solidly Republican. On the other side of the divide, modernists in all these religious traditions as well as secularists strongly favor the Democrats. Modernist Mainline Protestants, for example, now favor the Democrats by a more than two-to-one margin.

A Different Kind of Divide

Even though the evidence for a religion divide is compelling, it is important to note that the bulk of membership in both parties is made up of people of faith. Moreover, while the correlation between holding conservative religious beliefs and voting for conservative candidates is strong, it is not universal. For example, African Americans and Latinos generally hold traditionalist religious views. Yet African Americans identify with the Democratic Party by a margin of more than seven to one, and in 2004 supported Kerry by nearly nine to one. Latinos are not as strongly tied to the Democrats; in

Partisan Affiliation by Major Religious Groups

Traditionalists, whether Evangelical, Mainline Protestant, or Catholic, are more likely to be Republicans, while those who are eager to adapt their faith to modern beliefs or who are secular in their outlook are more likely to be Democratic.

MAJORITY REPUBLICAN (%)			
Traditionalist Evangelical	70	10	20
Traditionalist Mainline	59	10	31
Traditionalist Catholic	57	13	30
Evangelical (all)	56	17	27
PLURALITY REPUBLICAN (%)			
Centrist Evangelical	48	22	30
Centrist Mainline	47	20	33
Mainline Protestant (all)	44	18	38
Other Christians	42	36	22
PLURALITY DEMOCRATIC (%)			
Catholic (all)	41	15	44
ENTIRE SAMPLE	38	20	42
Unaffiliated believers	28	37	35
Unaffiliated	27	30	43
Latino Protestants	37	20	43
Modernist Evangelical	32	24	44
Seculars	29	27	44
Centrist Catholic	35	19	46
MAJORITY DEMOCRATIC (%)			
Modernist Catholic	37	11	52
Atheist, agnostic	19	27	54
Other faiths	12	33	55
Modernist Mainline	23	21	56
Latino Catholic	15	24	61
Jewish	21	11	68
Black Protestants	11	18	71

Source: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute, University of Akron, March-May 2004. Answers based on replies from all adults. Note: "Democratic" and "Republican" includes those who indicated they were leaning to the party in question.

2004, according to estimates from the exit polls, President Bush captured between 40% and 44% of the Latino vote. Still, this is another bloc that is traditionalist in its religious outlook and Democratic in its voting habits. Clearly, then, the behavior of these and other voting blocs is influenced by a range of factors, including race, gender, socioeconomic status and region. Level of religious engagement is just one of many determinants. But where does it stand in the hierarchy?

Religion's Role in Presidential Voting

By doing a multiple regression analysis of exit poll and other public opinion survey data from 2004 and 2000, we have assigned a relative weight to the impact that a number of demographic markers had on a person's vote for president. As the table below indicates, church attendance tied with race as the single most important influence in 2004; it also far outstripped other individual demographic characteristics such as gender or income. Church attendance was more important in 2004 than it had been in 2000. And even though race and religion had a similar statistical impact in 2004, the overall importance of religion in last year's vote was arguably greater. That is because the impact of race on voter choice is almost entirely a function of the high level of support that African Americans — 12.3% of the total population — give to Democrats. But the relationship between church attendance and vote choice is seen across the full range of the population.

Relative Importance of Religious Engagement in Presidential Vote, 2004 and 2000

	INDEX OF IMPACT*	
	2000 ^a	2004 ^b
Church attendance	22	28
Race	28	28
Union household	11	15
Urban/rural	11	11
Income	08	09
South/non-South	09	08
Age	05	07
Gender	17	07
Education	04	05

* Index based on standardized regression coefficients computed in a multiple regression analysis predicting Democratic vs. Republican vote from demographic characteristics and church attendance.

^a Data from VNS Exit Poll

^b Data from PRC Election Weekend Poll

The Polarizing Issue Agenda

The most important cause of this new church attendance gap is the mix of social and cultural issues that have come to the fore in the modern era. The so-called moral issues — prayer in school, abortion, homosexuality, gay marriage — have tended to push the religiously observant into one political corner and the more secular into the other. These differences over specific policy issues are amplified and exacerbated by a more general division over the popular culture, as more religiously observant Americans have come to decry what they see as the morally decadent influence of movies, songs, music videos, television programs, video games and the like. In a July 2003 Pew poll, Hollywood was seen as more hostile to religion than any other group tested, including the news media and academia. Not surprisingly, the perception that Hollywood is unfriendly toward religion is even greater among those who are religious. While 45% of the general population say Hollywood is hostile to religion, nearly six in ten of those who are strongly religious feel this way.

How the Public Rates Institutions' Attitudes Toward Religion

	FRIENDLY	NEUTRAL	UNFRIENDLY	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
	%	%	%	%
Republican Party	52	27	10	11
Conservatives	51	25	10	14
Democratic Party	42	36	12	10
Liberals	26	33	27	14
Professors	18	40	26	16
News media	16	41	34	9
Hollywood	16	31	45	8

Source: *Religion and Politics: Contention and Consensus*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, July 2003. Answers based on replies from all adults.

The current fight over gay marriage is the most recent example of the kind of religious and political tensions that flow from these cultural wedge issues. The question of whether homosexuals should be allowed to marry came to the fore in the fall of 2003, after the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ruled that denying same-sex marriage violated that state's constitution and several cities and towns, including San Francisco, began granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The issue found its way into the 2004 presidential campaign when President Bush endorsed a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would define marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

Polls show that nearly six in ten Americans oppose gay marriage. But a breakdown of these numbers by level of religious engagement more clearly underscores the fissures created by this issue. Among those with a high level of religious commitment, fully 80% oppose same-sex matrimony. Among those with average levels of religious commitment, the opposition drops to 57%, and among those with a low level of religious commitment, it drops further to 39%.

A similar dynamic is at work in the debate over embryonic stem cell research, another issue that attracted attention in the 2004 campaign. The paramount issue for some people is what they see as the destruction of life in its embryonic form. Others put more emphasis on the possibility that stem cell research could lead to cures for debilitating diseases. While 52% of all American adults favor embryonic stem cell research, the level of support drops to 34% among those with a high level of religious commitment, and it rises to 66% among those with a low level of religious commitment.

Opposition to Gay Marriage is Higher Among the Faithful

	LEVEL OF RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT		
	HIGH	AVERAGE	LOW
	%	%	%
Favor	12	35	50
Oppose	80	57	39
Don't know	8	8	11

Source: *Republicans Unified, Democrats Split on Gay Marriage*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, November 2003 (data: October 2003). Answers based on replies from all adults.

Different Views on Stem Cell Research

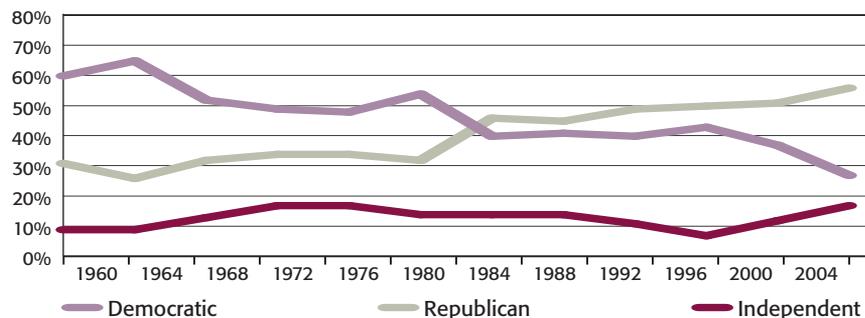
MORE IMPORTANT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH	2002	2004	INCREASE, '02-'04
	%	%	
TOTAL	43	52	9
18-29	46	54	8
30-49	46	55	9
50-64	40	52	12
65+	34	44	10
College graduate	55	61	6
Some college	46	50	4
High school graduate	34	49	15
Less than H.S. grad.	36	47	11
White Protestant	38	48	10
Evangelical	26	33	7
Mainline	51	66	14
White Catholic	43	55	12
Secular	66	68	2
LEVEL OF RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT*			
High	21	34	13
Moderate	40	55	15
Low	61	66	5
POLITICAL ORIENTATION			
Conservative Republican	32	35	3
Moderate/Liberal Republican	48	54	6
Independent	49	57	8
Conservative/Mod Democrat	43	58	15
Liberal Democrat	55	72	17

*Combination of religious attendance and importance of religion

Source: *GOP the Religion-Friendly Party, But Stem-Cell Issue May Help Democrats*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 2004. Answers based on replies from all adults.

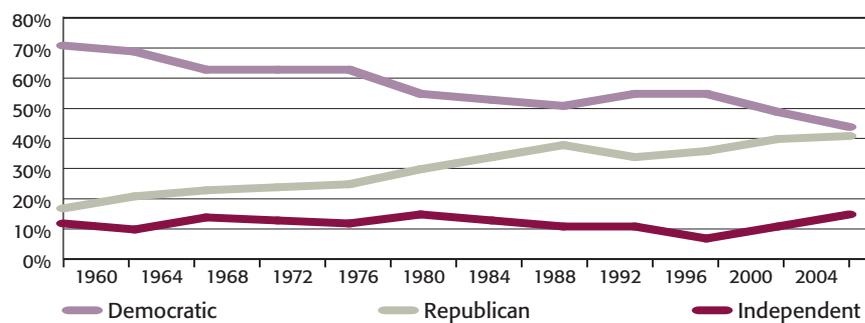
Evangelicals and Party Identification, 1960-2004

% PARTY IDENTIFICATION



Catholics and Party Identification, 1960-2004

% PARTY IDENTIFICATION



Source: National Election Studies, University of Michigan (for 1960-2000); Bliss Institute (2004)
 Note: "Democratic" and "Republican" includes those who indicated they were leaning to the party in question.

Changing Political Demographics

Historically, religious fissures in the political arena have tended to break along denominational lines rather than by level of religious commitment. Throughout much of the 19th and 20th centuries, tensions between Protestants and Catholics often took on a partisan cast. During the 1930s, for example, New Deal Democrats overwhelmingly won the support of Catholics, as well as white and black Protestants in the South. Republicans, on the other hand, drew the bulk of their support from white Protestants in the Northeast, Midwest and West. These patterns held until the 1960s, when a major realignment began to take place, prompted by a mix of racial and social issues that would come to define the "culture wars" of the ensuing decades. The civil rights movement was one key trigger. It sent Southern whites (of all faith traditions) over to the Republican column and helped solidify African-American support for the Democratic Party. Another trigger was a pair of U.S. Supreme Court decisions: the 1962 decision that banned organized prayer in public schools, and the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that guaranteed the right to an abortion. Those rulings generated a backlash among religious conservatives that reverberates to this day. For the past generation, the Republican Party has become the standard-bearer of a social conservative agenda and the natural home for those who are traditionalist in their religious views. In particular, the GOP has embraced the antiabortion movement, making it a central pillar of the party's platform.

These developments produced significant political shifts among the nation's major faith traditions. White Evangelicals, who had strongly favored Democrats in 1960 (by a two-to-one margin) are now securely in the GOP camp. According to the Religious Landscape survey, Evangelicals now identify themselves as Republican by a 56% to 27% margin. Moreover, the 2004 exit poll showed that a whopping 78% of white Evangelicals voted for President Bush, and that they comprised 23% of the overall electorate, making them by far the single most potent voting bloc in the electorate last year.

Roman Catholics have also shifted party allegiances, although not quite as dramatically as Evangelicals. In 1960, 71% of Catholics identified themselves as Democratic or leaning Democratic. By 2004, that number had dropped to 44%, with 41% favoring the GOP. Much of this change took place in the 1970s and '80s, years when Catholics made up a substantial portion of so-called "Reagan Democrats" who were conservative on moral issues and drawn to President Reagan's emphasis on traditional values and patriotism.

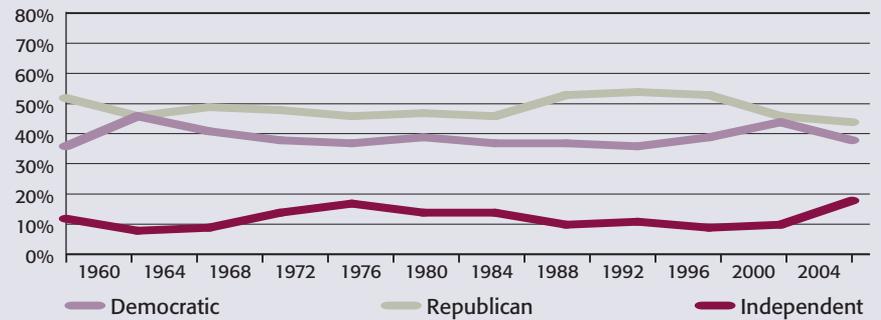
While Democrats have been hurt by these changes, they have benefited from other ideological shifts within faith traditions. For instance, Democratic support from Black Protestants has gone up sharply, rising from 50% in 1960 to more than 70% today. Meanwhile, Mainline Protestants, once the religious foundation of the GOP, have been trending away from the Republicans, dropping from 52% in 1960 to 44% today. Democrats have also picked up support in the Jewish community. In the last 12 years, according to the Religious Landscape survey, the number of Jews who identify themselves as Democrats has jumped from 45% to 68%. In 2004, however, President Bush bucked that trend a bit. Exit polls show he picked up 25% of the Jewish vote, up from the 19% he had received four years earlier.

All of these political shifts among religious denominations have coincided with related regional changes. The movement of Evangelicals to the Republican Party, for example, is part of a broader shift to the GOP among white voters in the Evangelical-heavy South. Today, Republicans dominate the region in much the same way Democrats did until a generation ago. Likewise, parts of the Northeast and West that were once reliably Republican now favor Democratic candidates.

These changes have created a partisan landscape that is more ideologically and geographically coherent — and more conducive to sorting out supporters by degree of religious engagement rather than by denomination. These new patterns are born out by the Religious Landscape survey, which shows that the GOP-dominated South and Midwest have higher rates of church attendance than do the Democratic-dominated Northeast and West.

Mainline Protestants and Party Identification, 1960-2004

% PARTY IDENTIFICATION



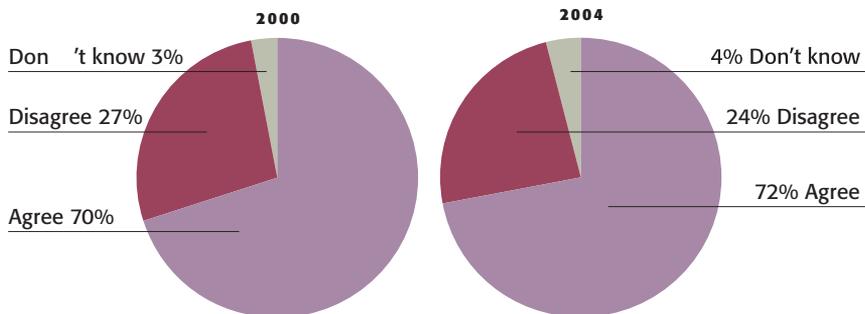
Source: National Election Studies, University of Michigan (for 1960-2000); Bliss Institute, University of Akron (2004)
 Note: "Democratic" and "Republican" includes those who indicated they were leaning to the party in question.

Worship Attendance by Region

	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	WEST	SOUTH	ALL
Once a week or more	14%	16%	13%	23%	17%
Once a week	27%	30%	23%	24%	26%
Once or twice a month	12%	16%	15%	19%	16%
A few times a year	19%	15%	17%	15%	16%
Seldom	17%	13%	16%	11%	14%
Never	11%	10%	16%	8%	11%

Source: Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute, University of Akron, March-May 2004. Answers based on replies from all adults.

Presidents Should Have Strong Religious Beliefs



Source: *GOP the Religion-Friendly Party, But Stem-Cell Issue May Help Democrats*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 2004. Answers based on registered voters.

Politicians Mention Their Own Faith and Religion...

	2003			2004		
	TOO MUCH	TOO LITTLE	RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	TOO LITTLE	RIGHT AMOUNT
Total	21%	41%	29%	27%	31%	32%
White	21%	38%	32%	26%	29%	36%
Evangel. Prot.	6%	64%	26%	11%	50%	32%
Mainline Prot.	22%	23%	44%	27%	22%	39%
Catholic	20%	37%	35%	30%	16%	47%
Black	18%	62%	14%	22%	43%	19%
Hispanic	18%	46%	23%	29%	40%	21%

Source: *GOP the Religion-Friendly Party, But Stem-Cell Issue May Help Democrats*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 2004. Answers based on replies from all adults.

Should Churches Express Views on Political Matters?

	SHOULD	SHOULD KEEP OUT	DON'T KNOW
Total	52	44	4
18-29	59	36	5
30-49	55	41	4
50-64	49	47	4
65+	38	54	8
White	50	46	4
Evangelical	68	27	5
High commitment	73	23	4
Less commitment	59	36	5
Mainline	43	53	4
Catholic	46	51	3
Black	66	30	4
Protestant	72	24	4
Hispanic	53	40	7
Catholic	55	42	3

Source: *Religion and Politics: Contention and Consensus*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, July 2003. Answers based on replies from all adults.

Increased Acceptance of Religion in the Public Square

Polls show that most Americans strongly believe that state and church should keep a healthy distance. But this conviction coexists with an equally strong belief that religion should have a substantial presence in American public life. According to the August 2004 Pew survey, more than seven in ten Americans want their president to have strong religious beliefs. In the same poll, only about a quarter of voters said that politicians “mention religious faith and prayer too much,” a finding that should be judged in the context of two successive presidential campaigns in which both major party candidates frequently discussed the role of religion in their lives (sometimes on their own initiative, often in response to queries from citizens or journalists).

Voters even accept a limited role for churches in the political process. According to the July 2003 Pew Survey, 52% of Americans agree that churches should express views on political matters. Not surprisingly, support for political involvement is highest among Evangelicals and Black Protestants — the two faith groups where the churches tend to be the most politically active. Interestingly, as the table shows, young voters favor church involvement in politics more enthusiastically than do their older counterparts.

That matters of faith and politics often intersect is not surprising given the highly religious nature of this country. Six out of ten Americans say religion is very important to them, and more than four in ten report they attend a house of worship at least once a week. At the same time, however, there are lines that most Americans do not want religious institutions to cross. For instance, the August 2004 Pew survey found that a solid majority (65%) of people believe churches should not endorse political candidates. Even among the very religious, 61% oppose candidate endorsements. Strong opposition to candidate endorsement extends even to indirect but related actions, such as the announcement by a number of Roman Catholic bishops during the 2004 presidential campaign that they would deny communion to Kerry and other Catholic politicians who supported abortion rights. According to the August poll, 64% of Americans believed that those bishops were acting improperly. Interestingly, opposition was particularly strong among Roman Catholics.

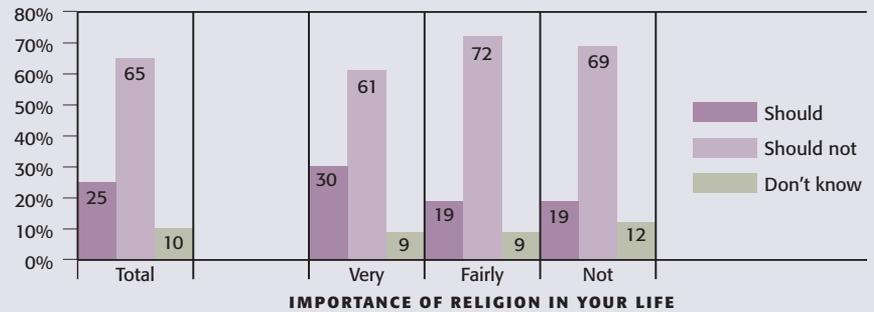
The 2004 Election and the Evangelical Vote

The 2004 campaign showed once again that White Evangelicals are by far the most important component of the GOP coalition. This group makes up nearly a quarter of the electorate and votes Republican by increasingly lopsided margins. The president garnered 78% of all White Evangelical votes in 2004, a 10 percentage point increase over what he received four years earlier.

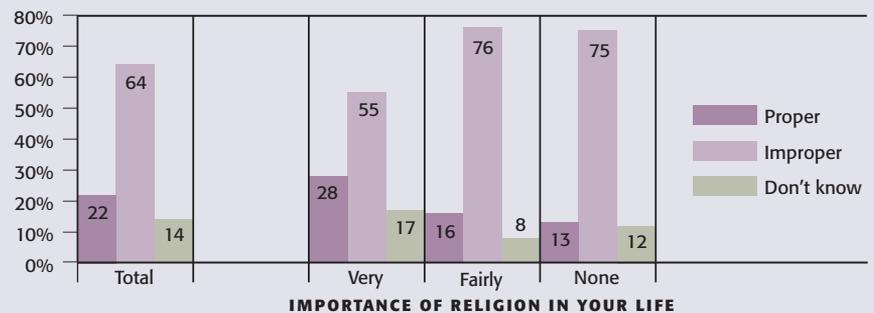
Bush made less dramatic but still significant gains among most other religious groups. He took a majority of the Roman Catholic vote, and that against a Roman Catholic challenger

Churches, Politics and Government

VIEW ON WHETHER CHURCHES SHOULD ENDORSE POLITICAL CANDIDATES



Is It Proper for Catholic Leaders to Deny Communion to Politicians?



Source: *GOP the Religion-Friendly Party, But Stem-Cell Issue May Help Democrats*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 2004. Answers based on replies from all adults.

— garnering 52% of their support, 5 percentage points more than his share in 2000. This increase was due in part to his strong showing among Catholics who attend Mass regularly. These Catholics, who gave Bush 56% of their vote, were more likely to agree with the church's opposition to gay marriage, abortion and embryonic stem cell research, and hence lined up more closely with the president's positions on these issues. But Bush also did better in 2004 than he did in 2000 among less observant Catholics, garnering 49% of their vote last year, compared with 42% four years earlier.

Bush likewise gained ground among Black Protestants (up 6 percentage points), although his share of that strongly Democratic constituency was still only 13%. The issue of gay marriage appears to have helped the president with this group, which overwhelmingly opposes extending legal recognition to such unions. With Jews, another reliable Democratic constituency, the president increased his share by 6 percentage points and did especially well among the Orthodox Jews and Jews who attend synagogue regularly. He even managed to gain ground among secular voters, winning 31% of their vote, or one percentage point more than he did in 2000. In sum, Bush did considerably better in 2004 among the religious than among the less religious, but between 2000 and 2004, he actually made bigger gains among those who seldom if ever attend church than he did among the religiously observant.

Presidential Vote by Religion, 2000-2004

	2000 VNS EXIT POLL		2004 NEP EXIT POLL		BUSH GAIN
	BUSH %	GORE %	BUSH %	KERRY %	
Total	48	48	51	48	3
Protestant (all)	56	42	59	40	3
White Protestant	62	35	67	33	5
Evangelical	68	30	78	21	10
Mainline	53	43	55	45	2
Catholic (all)	47	50	52	47	5
White, non-Hisp. Catholic	52	45	56	43	4
Hispanic Catholic	33	65	39	58	6
Black Protestant	7	91	13	86	6
Jewish	19	79	25	74	6
Other religion	28	62	23	74	-5
Secular	30	61	31	67	1
Protestant					
Attend weekly or more	64	34	66	33	2
Attend less often	48	49	52	47	4
Catholic					
Attend weekly or more	53	44	56	43	3
Attend less often	42	54	49	50	7

Notes: Division between Evangelical and Mainline Protestants in 2000 established from Pew pre-election poll. All other estimates based on Voter News Service (VNS) and National Election Pool (NEP) exit polls. Hispanics included in designation of White Protestants; exit poll figures adjusted to fit this description.

Church Attendance and the Presidential Vote, 2000-2004

	2000 VNS EXIT POLL		2004 NEP EXIT POLL		BUSH GAIN
	BUSH %	GORE %	BUSH %	KERRY %	
More than once a week	63	36	64	35	1
Once a week	57	40	58	41	1
Monthly	46	51	50	49	4
A few times a year	42	54	45	54	3
Never	32	61	36	62	4

Source: *Religion and the Presidential Vote*, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec. 6, 2004. Answers based on replies from adults. 2000 data from VNS; 2004 data from NEP.

Profiles of Religious Groups

The tables on the next few pages present a political and demographic profile of major religious groups in the United States, with comparisons with the population as a whole. The groups are divided according to adherence to religious tradition (for example, Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant or Jewish); some of the larger groups are also divided by religious commitment, as measured by attendance at religious services. Data for this analysis are drawn from two sources. Demographic

characteristics and party identification are based on a compilation of Pew Research Center surveys conducted between January and August 2004 with a total sample size of 16,046. Political values were measured in two large Pew Research Center surveys conducted in July 2002 and July 2003. These tables are based on surveys of all adult Americans; some of the tables earlier in this chapter are based on surveys of voters. For this reason, there are some differences between the two sets of tables.

The only religious category where the president lost ground between 2000 and 2004 was among those who identified themselves as “other religion,” a catch-all category that includes Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. Bush won 23% of this group, or 5 percentage points less than he had received in the previous presidential election. This loss of support is due at least in part to the president’s rising unpopularity among American Muslims. Although a plurality of Muslims supported Bush over Gore in 2000, many have become disillusioned with the administration’s support for the Patriot Act and other domestic security steps taken in the wake of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

But groups that comprise the “other religions” category make up only 7% of the electorate, not enough to significantly mitigate the president’s gains among other denominations. In both 2000 and 2004, the church attendance gap was an important element in President Bush’s victories. Whether it persists and continues to favor Republicans is likely to be one of the most important political stories of the coming decades.

How the Major U.S Religious Groups Compare on Demographics

	TOTAL	COMMITTED* WHITE EVANG. PROTESTANTS	OTHER* WHITE EVANG. PROTESTANTS	COMMITTED WHITE MAINLINE PROTESTANTS	OTHER WHITE MAINLINE PROTESTANTS	COMMITTED BLACK PROTESTANTS	OTHER BLACK PROTESTANTS
UNWEIGHTED N	20,587	3,000	1,578	1,166	3,281	937	643
Total	100%	13.6%	8.1%	4.9%	15.0%	4.7%	3.6%
Male	48	42	46	38	52	36	50
Female	52	58	54	62	48	64	50
18-29	21	13	15	14	17	20	30
30-49	39	35	41	32	39	40	42
50-64	22	26	25	23	25	23	19
65+	16	25	18	30	18	15	8
Less than high school	13	13	20	10	12	21	25
High school graduate	32	34	38	27	33	31	36
Some college	28	27	28	28	28	29	25
College graduate	26	25	14	36	27	19	14
Hispanic	11	5	5	5	4	4	6
Inc. less than \$20,000	18	17	22	14	15	28	36
\$20,000 to \$29,999	12	11	16	11	12	15	19
\$30,000 to \$49,999	22	24	23	19	23	21	19
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15	17	15	15	16	11	8
\$75,000+	21	17	14	26	23	12	9
Married	53	66	55	62	56	39	28
Divorced	12	10	16	9	14	15	14
Separated	2	2	3	1	2	5	6
Widowed	9	13	11	14	8	11	8
Never been married	24	10	15	14	20	31	43
Labor Household	13	11	13	13	14	16	12
East	20	10	9	16	18	11	18
Midwest	23	24	26	30	29	18	20
South	35	51	47	38	32	62	52
West	22	15	18	16	21	9	10
Large city	21	12	14	14	16	38	40
Suburb	23	19	16	24	23	18	17
Small city or town	36	39	41	40	36	33	32
Rural area	19	29	27	21	24	9	8
Voter registration							
Yes, certain	74	84	71	83	75	77	68
Not certain	26	16	29	17	25	23	32

* Note: "Committed" defined as attending church weekly or more often. "Other" defined as attending church less than weekly or not at all. Demographic items, party identification, interest in government, and opinion on Iraq based on Pew surveys conducted January 2004 to October 2004. Other values questions based on Pew surveys conducted July 2002 and July 2003.

COMMITTED NON-HISP. CATHOLICS	OTHER NON-HISP. CATHOLICS	HISPANIC CATHOLICS	JEWS	MORMONS	MUSLIMS	EASTERN ORTHODOX	SECULARS	OTHER RELIGION
1,757	2,166	904	513	417	114	153	2,589	751
7.5%	10.5%	6.9%	2.0%	2.0%	0.6%	0.7%	13.1%	3.8%
42	51	45	49	51	66	53	59	53
58	49	55	51	49	34	47	41	47
10	19	35	17	28	32	18	36	28
34	46	43	35	36	56	50	40	45
25	23	15	26	22	8	14	17	21
30	11	7	22	13	1	15	6	6
8	10	18	4	9	11	6	12	12
32	33	34	16	27	33	23	29	24
26	32	29	27	38	26	23	29	29
34	25	19	53	26	29	48	30	34
0	0	100	2	4	11	7	10	8
14	13	22	9	16	19	12	17	21
9	10	15	4	12	11	10	12	13
19	23	26	13	25	30	15	21	20
15	16	13	14	20	10	15	15	14
26	28	17	40	17	16	38	22	19
60	52	48	53	63	52	57	40	45
9	15	11	11	9	6	10	13	13
1	2	4	1	2	4	0	3	3
15	6	4	11	6	2	8	3	5
15	25	33	24	21	35	25	40	33
15	18	14	11	9	15	13	11	13
34	37	16	44	3	31	38	21	17
30	26	9	11	7	23	19	21	20
24	20	32	24	16	25	24	26	30
12	16	43	22	73	22	18	33	33
18	18	37	35	20	38	20	24	25
28	32	19	38	23	21	32	24	21
37	32	34	20	43	37	34	35	33
16	17	9	5	13	3	12	16	19
87	74	64	84	75	56	67	64	67
13	26	36	16	25	44	33	36	33

How the Major U.S Religious Groups Compare on Political Attitudes

	TOTAL	COMMITTED* WHITE EVANG. PROTESTANTS	OTHER* WHITE EVANG. PROTESTANTS	COMMITTED WHITE MAINLINE PROTESTANTS	OTHER WHITE MAINLINE PROTESTANTS	COMMITTED BLACK PROTESTANTS	OTHER BLACK PROTESTANTS
Party							
Republican	29	55	38	38	31	5	7
Democrat	33	20	27	29	29	69	65
Independent	31	20	29	26	34	20	23
No preference	4	3	4	4	4	4	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iraq							
Right decision	55	74	67	57	59	26	31
Wrong decision	38	19	27	37	34	62	59
Pres. vote choice							
Bush/leaning to Bush	45	74	57	54	48	10	6
Kerry/leaning to Kerry	45	20	35	38	43	77	82
Nader/leaning to Nader	4	2	2	2	4	3	3
Values (2002-2003)							
	100%	14.9%	8.3%	5.2%	16.7%	5.6%	4.0%
Unweighted N							
	4849	711	364	257	773	389	256
Govt. should help more needy people, even if it means more debt							
Agree	50	39	51	42	44	71	81
Disagree	45	56	45	52	52	26	15
Businesses make too much profit							
Agree	59	60	66	57	56	58	64
Disagree	35	33	28	32	40	36	29
Best way to ensure peace is through military strength							
Agree	59	64	72	65	63	49	51
Disagree	37	32	24	30	34	46	45
Discrimination against blacks is rare today							
Agree	31	37	32	33	31	24	30
Disagree	64	57	59	57	65	75	68
School boards should have right to fire gay teachers							
Agree	34	58	46	31	26	42	41
Disagree	61	36	47	60	70	55	54
Govt. regulation of business does more harm than good							
Agree	49	56	61	44	49	45	55
Disagree	42	38	31	44	44	49	35

* Note: "Committed" defined as attending church weekly or more often. "Other" defined as attending church less than weekly or not at all.
Demographic items, party identification, interest in government, and opinion on Iraq based on Pew surveys conducted January 2004 to October 2004.
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COMMITTED NON-HISP. CATHOLICS	OTHER NON-HISP. CATHOLICS	HISPANIC CATHOLICS	JEWS	MORMONS*	MUSLIMS*	EASTERN ORTHODOX*	SECULARS	OTHER RELIGION
33	28	19	17	55	7	26	15	13
34	32	45	54	14	46	32	31	35
28	34	29	23	24	40	33	44	42
3	3	4	2	5	4	5	6	5
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
55	57	50	38	76	24	43	42	41
38	37	42	52	16	69	43	52	51
48	42	35	25	71			27	29
42	49	55	65	22			59	60
3	4	4	3	4			7	6
8.3%	11.9%	5.7%	1.8%				9.1%	4.3%
407	544	207	98				421	216
51	47	50	62				61	48
42	49	43	35				34	47
57	61	70	52				57	58
38	36	25	47				39	32
62	63	57	49				44	42
35	35	39	50				53	50
31	24	44	19				27	22
64	71	52	75				69	71
32	22	29	18				19	27
61	74	69	80				78	67
49	50	47	34				45	38
43	43	44	63				44	48

* Blank fields indicate insufficient data.



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