

The Role of **FAITH** in the 2012 Presidential Vote

A compilation of publicly released survey data

A Resource Developed by:

Center for the Study of American Culture & Faith

AN INITIATIVE OF UNITED IN PURPOSE



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The Role of Faith in the 2012 Presidential Vote

This information packet was prepared by the Center for the Study of American Culture and Faith. The packet includes information from various public sources.

The 2012 presidential election was one of the most contentious campaigns in recent times. Many observers believe changing demographic trends will make it increasingly difficult for Republican candidates to win the presidency in the future. The following pages display information from a range of respected survey research sources to provide insight on how religious beliefs, behaviors, affiliations, and experiences impacted the 2012 presidential vote.

About the Center for the Study of American Culture and Faith

an initiative of United In Purpose Education

The Center for the Study of American Culture and Faith is an initiative of United in Purpose Education, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that educates and encourages people to embrace a Biblical worldview. That outcome is accomplished by developing and distributing information and resources for use by churches and the public.

Topics to be addressed in future compilations:

- Gun Ownership and Regulation
- Religious Freedom
- Same Sex Marriage
- Abortion Rights
- Government Welfare Programs
- Environmental Policy
- Leadership and Governance
- Morality and Values
- Media and Technology
- Lifestyle Choices
- Immigration and Ethnicity
- Community Well-being
- Business Support and Regulation
- Household Economics
- Family, Marriage, and Parenting
- Public Health
- Crime, Poverty, and Justice
- Generational Differences

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The Role of Faith in the 2012 Presidential Vote

The 2012 presidential election was a long, hard-fought battle. After many months of contentious, expensive, and media-saturated campaigning, reliable polls showed a race that was up-for-grabs until the last week of the battle. In the end, Mr. Obama won a landslide victory in the Electoral College vote (332 to 206) and a decisive but less expansive popular vote victory (51% to 47%, based on 65.4 million votes compared to 60.7 million votes).

Each candidate relied heavily upon strong support from a diverse collection of religious segments. Mr. Obama was favored by Black Protestants, Catholics, Mainline Protestants, adults aligned with non-Christian faiths, and religious Skeptics (i.e., those who had no faith). Mr. Romney depended upon support from evangelicals, non-evangelical born again adults, and those aligned with non-mainline Protestant churches to keep the race close.

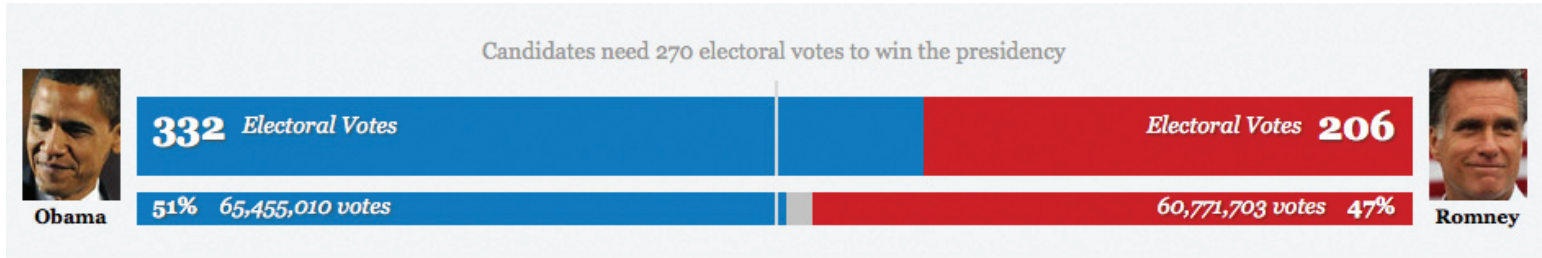
Despite the heartbreaking loss, Republicans experienced significant gains in support from 15 different demographic and theolographic voting segments, while Democrats realized significant gains among just two demographic and theolographic segments. Among the 15 groups that shifted a significant proportion of its votes to the Republican candidate from 2008 to 2012, six of those groups ultimately chose Mr. Obama over Mr. Romney.

The data that flowed from the election underscored an important point: demographic patterns, theolographic trends, religious beliefs and religious behaviors change very little from election to election. Attitudes, expectations, and experiences, however, change more dramatically and influence people's votes more overtly.

Faith and politics have formed some undeniable linkages over time. Currently, the more spiritually conservative and religiously active a person is, the more likely they are to vote for the Republican candidate. People who are less theologically conservative and whose religious life is more inconsistent tend to vote for the Democratic candidate. To wit, of the 26 states won by Mr. Obama, 22 have a below-average percentage of adults who are born again Christians. In contrast, of the 24 states won by Mr. Romney, 18 had an above-average proportion of born again adults.

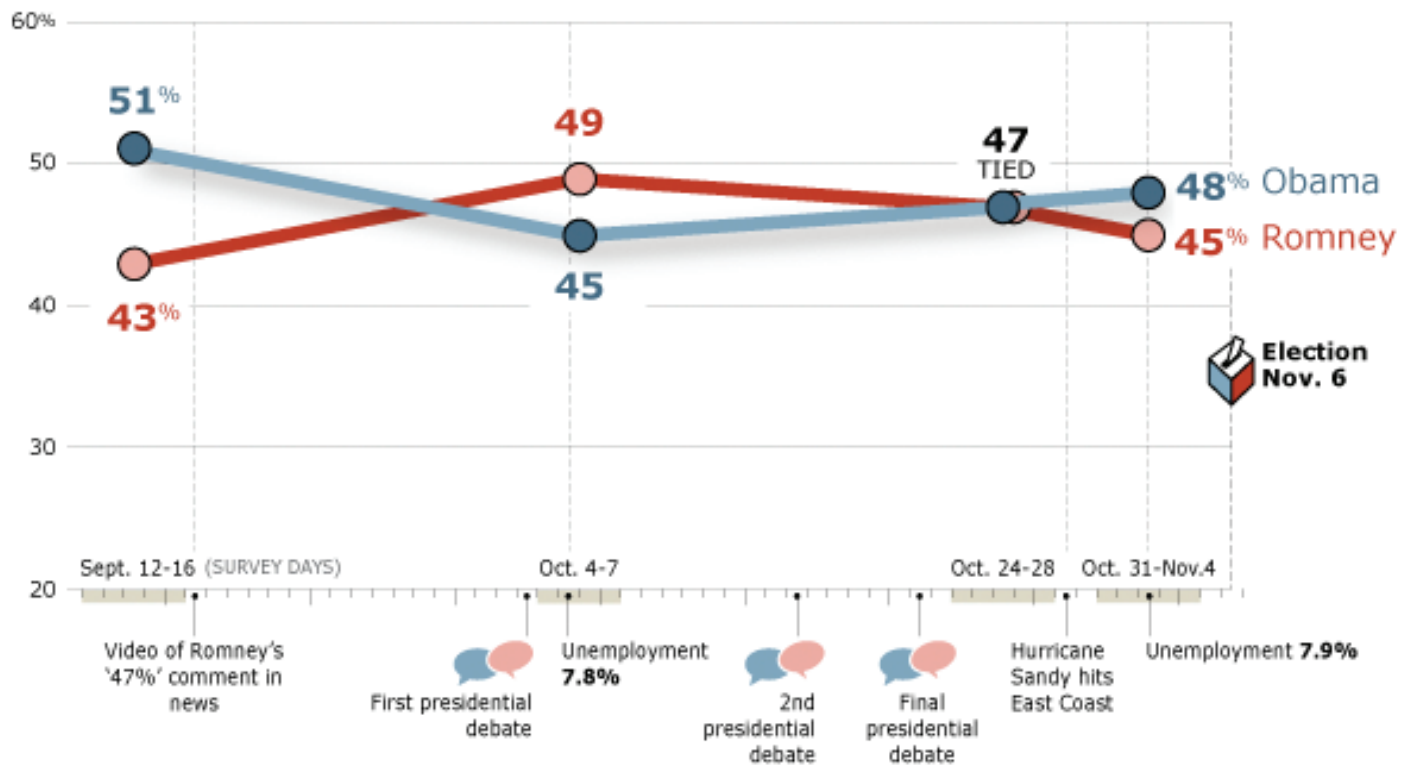
Churches played a minor role in the 2012 election, dispensing limited amounts of information about candidates and issues. In fact, since 2004, the last term in which a Republican was elected, the amount of information about elections and issues provided by churches has declined dramatically, especially in Protestant churches.

Presidential Race: National Results



The Close, Final Months of Campaign 2012

Percent of likely voters



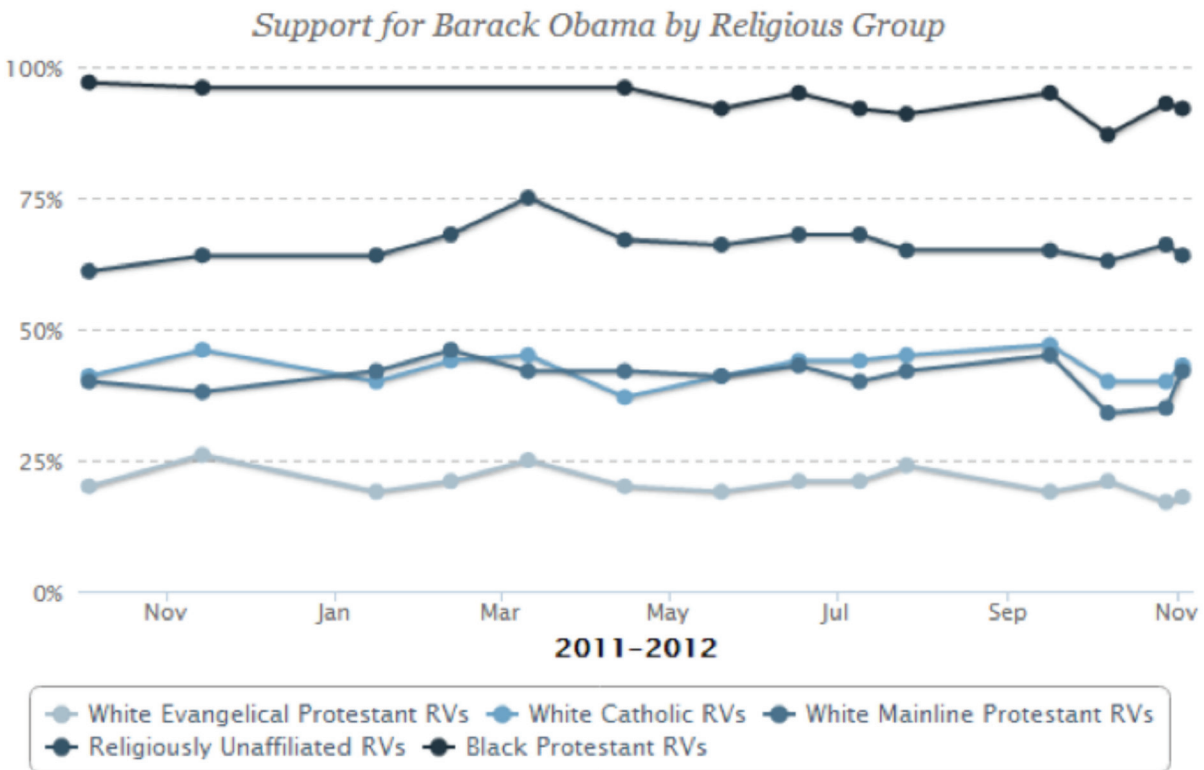
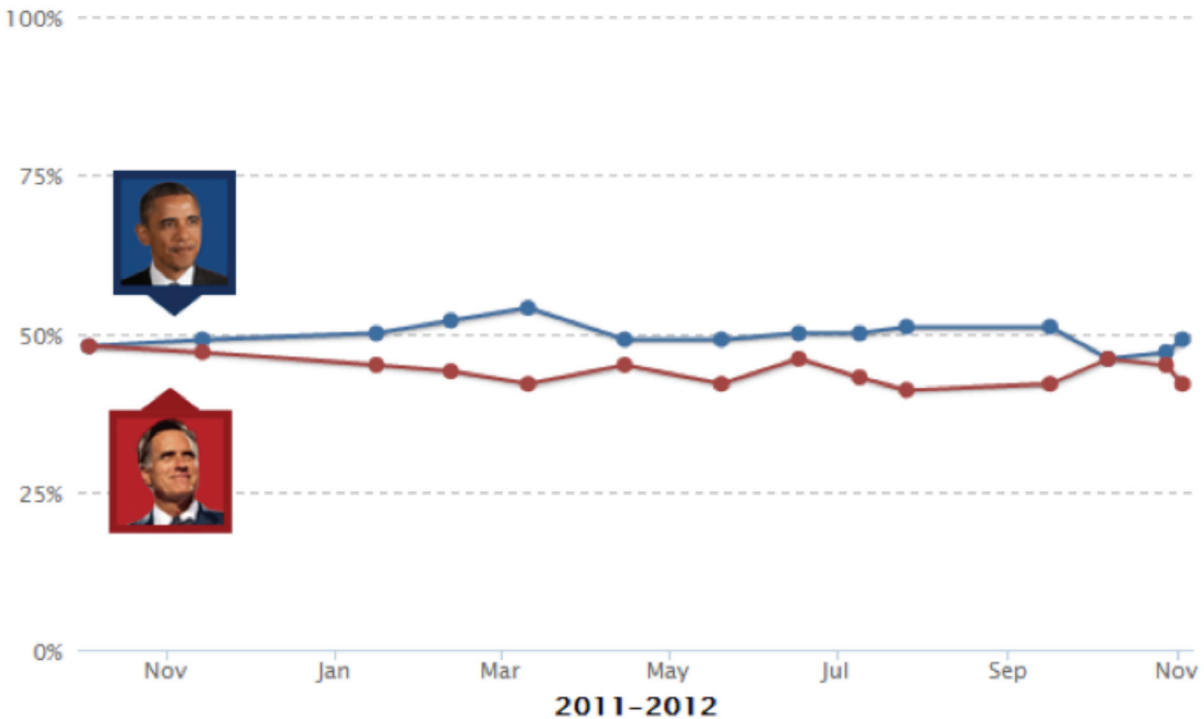
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/campaign-2012/?src=sdt-rightrail>

The Role of Faith in the 2012 Presidential Election

Center for the Study of American Faith and Culture – An Initiative of United in Purpose

Among all Registered Voters



Source: CNN, December 2012; www.cnn.com/election/2012/results/race/president; based on exit polls conducted by Edison Media Research on November 6, 2012.

Noteworthy Changes in Support from Demographic and Theolographic Segments

2008-2012

(Changes of 3 percentage points or more)

Gains in Support for Republican Candidate		Gains in Support for Democratic Candidate	
Jews	+9 pts	Asians	+11 pts
Age 18 to 29	+5 pts	Hispanics	+ 4 pts
Income \$100K+	+5 pts		
Males	+4 pts		
Whites	+4 pts		
Conservatives	+4 pts		
White evangelicals/ Born again	+4 pts		
Married	+4 pts		
Age 65 or older	+3 pts		
College graduate	+3 pts		
Income \$50k-99K	+3 pts		
Small city resident	+3 pts		
Protestants	+3 pts		
Catholics	+3 pts		
Nones	+3 pts		

Source: Center for the Study of American Culture & Faith, analysis of Edison Media Research 2012 exit poll data

Religious Makeup of the Electorate

	2000 %	2004 %	2008 %	2012 %	Net Change 08-12
Protestant/Other Christian	54	54	54	53	-1
White Prot/Other Christian	45	42	42	39	-3
Born-again /evangelical	n/a	21	23	23	--
Non-evangelical	n/a	20	19	16	-3
Black Protestant	6	8	9	9	--
Catholic	26	27	27	25	-2
White Catholic	21	20	19	18	-1
Hispanic Catholic	3	4	6	5	-1
Jewish	4	3	2	2	--
Other Faiths	6	7	6	7	+1
Religious unaffiliated	9	10	12	12	--
Attend worship services...					
More than weekly	14	16	12	14	+2
Once a week	28	26	27	28	+1
Few times a month	14	14	15	13	-2
Few times a year	28	28	28	27	-1
Never	14	15	16	17	+1

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/campaign-2012/?src=sdt-righttrail>

Presidential Vote by Religious Affiliation and Race

	2000		2004		2008		2012		Dem Change 08-12
	Gore %	Bush %	Kerry %	Bush %	Obama %	McCain %	Obama %	Romney %	
Protestant/Other Christian	48	48	48	51	53	46	50	48	-3
White Prot/Other Christian	42	56	40	59	45	54	42	57	-3
Born-again /evangelical	35	63	32	67	34	65	30	69	-4
Non-evangelical	n/a	n/a	21	79	26	73	20	79	-6
Black Prot/Other Christian	n/a	n/a	44	55	44	55	44	54	--
Catholic	92	7	86	13	94	4	95	5	+1
White Catholic	50	47	47	52	54	45	50	48	-4
Hispanic Catholic	45	52	43	56	47	52	40	59	-7
Jewish	65	33	65	33	72	26	75	21	+3
Other Faiths	79	19	74	25	78	21	69	30	-9
Religious unaffiliated	62	28	74	23	73	22	74	23	+1
Mormon	61	30	67	31	75	23	70	26	-5
	n/a	n/a	19	80	n/a	n/a	21	78	n/a

Note: Throughout this report, "Protestant" refers to people who described themselves as "Protestant," "Mormon" or "other Christian" in exit polls; this categorization most closely approximates the exit poll data reported immediately after the election by media sources.

Note: In this report, a few estimates for 2000, 2004 and 2008 differ slightly from previous Pew Forum analyses due to differences in data coding.

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/How-the-Faithful-Voted-2012-Preliminary-Exit-Poll-Analysis.aspx>

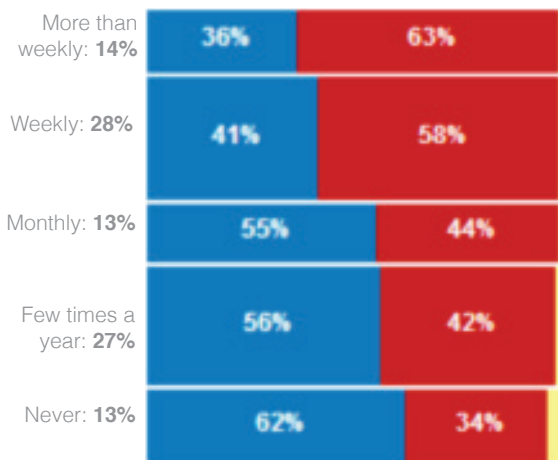
Presidential Vote by Religious Attendance

	2000		2004		2008		2012		Dem Change 08-12
	Gore %	Bush %	Kerry %	Bush %	Obama %	McCain %	Obama %	Romney %	
TOTAL	48	48	48	51	53	46	50	48	-3
Attend worship services...									
Weekly or more	39	59	39	61	43	55	39	59	-4
More than weekly	36	63	35	64	43	55	36	63	-7
Once a week	40	57	41	58	43	55	41	58	-2
Monthly/yearly	53	43	53	47	57	42	55	43	-2
Few times a month	51	46	49	50	53	46	55	44	+2
Few times a year	54	42	54	45	59	39	56	42	-3
Never	61	32	62	36	67	30	62	34	-5

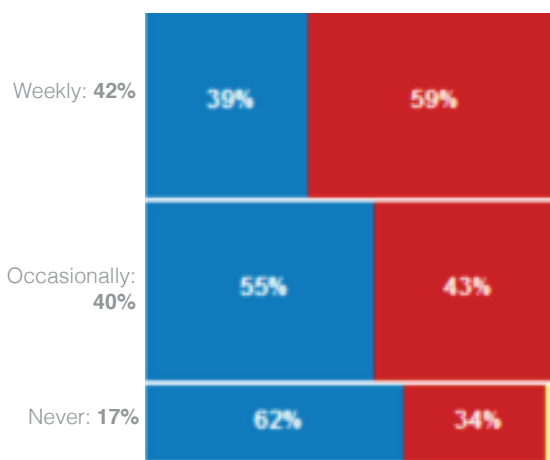
Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/campaign-2012/?src=sdt-righttrail>

Division of Vote by Religious Belief & Behavior

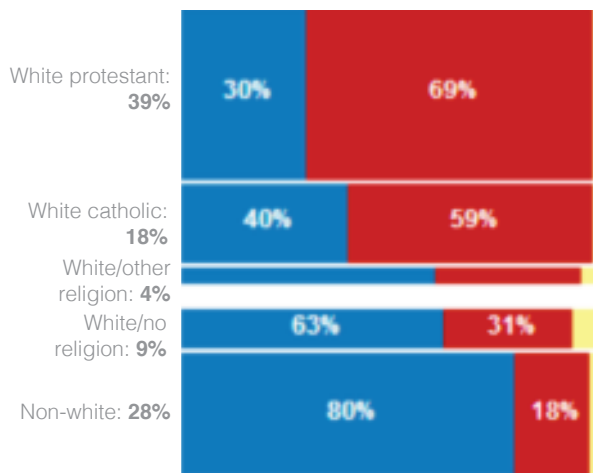
How Often Do You Attend Religious Services?



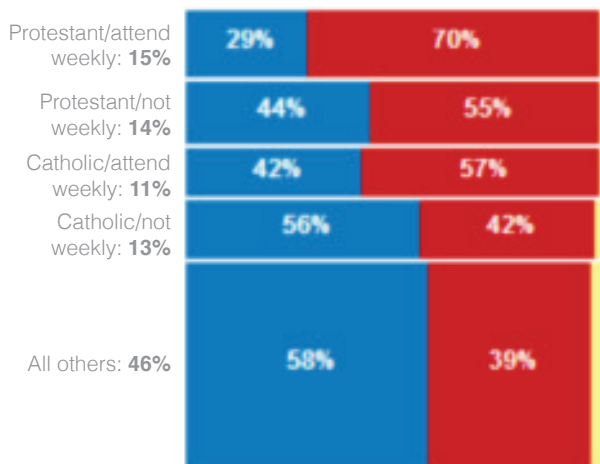
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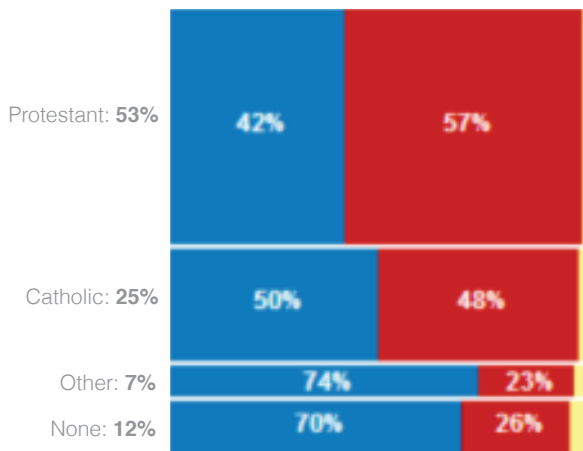
Vote by Religion and Race



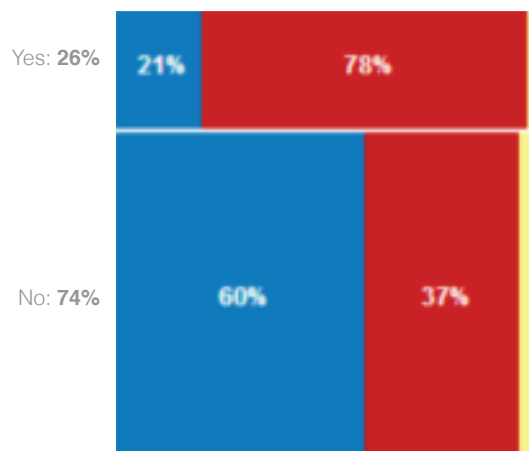
Vote by Religion and Church Attendance



Vote by Religion



Are You White Born-Again Christian?



Key: Red = Romney vote; Blue = Obama vote; Yellow = other vote

Source: CNN, December 2012; www.cnn.com/election/2012/results/race/president; based on exit polls conducted by Edison Media Research on November 6, 2012.

Presidential Elections 1996-2012: The Role of Faith

Candidates	Evangelical Christians	Non-Evangelical Born-Again	All Born-Again Christians	Notional Christians	Other Faiths	Skeptic/ No Faith	Catholic	Protestant
2012 OBAMA ROMNEY OTHER								
2008 OBAMA McCAIN OTHER								
2004 KERRY BUSH OTHER								
2000 GORE BUSH OTHER								
1996 CLINTON DOLE OTHER								
Definitions	Christians evidencing a strong commitment to Biblical precepts and active worship participation.	"Non-evangelical born again Christians" are those who meet the born again criteria but do not meet the evangelical criteria.	Believe they are going to heaven because of an active personal commitment to Jesus as their savior.	Notional Christians—the large segment of voters who consider themselves to be Christian but are not born again.	Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Non-Christian believers.	"Skeptics" includes individuals who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic, or having no religious faith.	Catholic Voters	Both Mainline and non-mainline Protestant churches.

Source: Barna Group. 2012, www.barna.org; <http://www.barna.org/culture-articles/595-the-role-of-faith-in-the-2012-election>?q=2012-election

Relationship of 2012 Voting Outcomes, Born Again, and Captive Christian Population, by State

	State	Obama Vote	Romney Vote	% Born Again	% Captive Chr
		US = 51%	US = 47%	US = 45%	US = 18%
1.	Alabama	38%	61%	67%	29%
2.	Alaska	41	55	NA	NA
3.	Arizona	44	54	34	13
4.	Arkansas	37	60	61	34
5.	California	60	37	35	13
6.	Colorado	51	46	39	15
7.	Connecticut	58	41	27	7
8.	Delaware	59	40	41	12
9.	Florida	50	49	44	16
10.	Georgia	46	53	60	22
11.	Hawaii	70	28	NA	NA
12.	Idaho	33	64	40	19
13.	Illinois	57	41	45	16
14.	Indiana	44	54	56	21
15.	Iowa	52	46	47	19
16.	Kansas	38	60	54	22
17.	Kentucky	38	60	66	24
18.	Louisiana	40	58	55	21
19.	Maine	56	41	34	10
20.	Maryland	62	36	43	16
21.	Massachusetts	61	37	22	5
22.	Michigan	54	45	44	15
23.	Minnesota	53	45	43	16
24.	Mississippi	44	55	69	32
25.	Missouri	44	54	56	21
26.	Montana	42	55	39	10
27.	Nebraska	38	60	50	18
28.	Nevada	52	46	30	8

continued on next page >>

Relationship of 2012 Voting Outcomes, Born Again, and Captive Christian Population, by State

	State	Obama Vote	Romney Vote	% Born Again	% Captive Chr
29.	New Hampshire	52%	46%	25%	10%
30.	New Jersey	58	41	33	12
31.	New Mexico	53	43	41	15
32.	New York	62	36	25	8
33.	North Carolina	48	50	62	25
34.	North Dakota	39	58	58	29
35.	Ohio	51	48	48	19
36.	Oklahoma	33	67	65	24
37.	Oregon	54	42	40	17
38.	Pennsylvania	52	47	42	15
39.	Rhode Island	63	35	23	6
40.	South Carolina	44	55	63	26
41.	South Dakota	40	58	58	29
42.	Tennessee	39	59	63	25
43.	Texas	41	57	52	19
44.	Utah	25	73	29	6
45.	Vermont	67	31	24	9
46.	Virginia	51	47	50	20
47.	Washington	56	41	42	15
48.	West Virginia	36	62	61	20
49.	Wisconsin	53	46	40	14
50.	Wyoming	28	69	39	10

Sources: Center for the Study of American Culture & Faith; Barna Group, 2012, States report.

Definitions:

- Born again Christians are NOT based on self-identification. Based on saying they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is important in their life today, and believe that when they die they will go to Heaven only because they confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior.
- Captive Christians are born again (see above criteria); "very committed" to the Christian faith; read the Bible and prayed in the past seven days outside of church; attended a church service in past seven days; hold an orthodox view of God; claim their religious faith is very important in their life.

How Much Voter Information Was Made Available in Church?

% saying information on parties or candidates was made available at their place of worship	Nov 2000	Nov 2004	Nov 2008	Nov 2012	08-12 Change
	%	%	%	%	%
All attending voters	14	27	15	13	-2
Protestant	16	26	16	13	-3
White evangelical	20	34	16	16	0
White mainline	4	8	7	8	+1
Catholic	10	31	14	17	+3
White Catholic	11	29	14	19	+5
% saying information on ballot initiatives or constitutional amendments was made available					
	--				
All attending voters	--	19	13	6	-7
Protestant	--	18	13	7	-6
White evangelical	--	23	15	8	-7
White mainline	--	8	7	3	-4
Catholic	--	23	11	5	-6
White Catholic	--	18	12	4	-8

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/2012/11/15/section-3-the-voting-process-and-the-accuracy-of-the-vote/#worship>

Few Were Urged to Vote a Particular Way at Their Place of Worship

Did the clergy at your place of worship urge you to vote in a particular way in the election, or not?

	Yes	No	DK	N
	%	%	%	%
All attending voters	5	93	2=100	659
Protestant	4	95	2=100	438
White evangelical	5	93	2=100	212
White mainline	3	96	1=100	124
Catholic	11	86	3=100	168
White Catholic	13	84	3=100	131

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/2012/11/15/section-3-the-voting-process-and-the-accuracy-of-the-vote/#worship>

Issues Discussed in Christian Churches

In recent months, have clergy spoken out about...

	Attend religious services monthly+
	%
Hunger & poverty?	74
Abortion?	37
Homosexuality?	33
Religious liberty?	21
Immigration?	16

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/2012/10/31/in-deadlocked-race-neither-side-has-ground-game-advantage/>

Catholics Hearing More About Abortion, Religious Liberty at Mass

In recent months, have clergy at your place of worship spoken out about...

Among those who attend services at least monthly and are...	Hunger/ poverty	Abortion	Homo sexuality	Religious liberty	Immi- gration
	%	%	%	%	%
Protestant	72	32	37	18	12
White evangelical	69	36	40	18	6
White mainline	73	19	24	12	7
Black Protestant	74	29	37	24	22
Catholic	82	62	29	32	23
White Catholic	83	58	20	36	11

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012; <http://www.people-press.org/2012/10/31/in-deadlocked-race-neither-side-has-ground-game-advantage/>

Size and Shape of the Voter Landscape, by Religious Segments

(as of November 2012)

Religious Segment	18+ Population # Mil	18+ Population %	Registered Voters # Mil	Registered Voters % of Segment	# of 18+ not registered	Voted in 2012 # Mil	Voted in 2012 % of Segment	Registered Voters not voting 2012 # Mil	Republican	Democrat	Independent
United States (Total Pop.)	240	100%	199	82%	43	127	52%	72	30%	42%	24%
Evangelicals	16	6%	14	90%	2	9	57%	5	59%	19%	17%
Non-evangelical Born Again	77	32%	67	87%	10	45	58%	22	37%	36%	21%
Notional Christians	100	42%	83	83%	17	53	53%	30	24%	45%	22%
Non-Christian Faith	17	7%	11	65%	6	8	46%	3	20%	40%	28%
Skeptics/None	31	13%	22	70%	9	12	38%	10	13%	49%	29%
All Protestants	122	51%	110	85%	12	71	58%	39	37%	38%	22%
All Born Again	89	37%	77	87%	12	51	57%	26	42%	34%	21%
All Non-Born Again	151	63%	121	80%	30	74	49%	47	22%	48%	25%
Mainline Protestant	41	17%	37	91%	4	23	55%	14	33%	44%	21%
Neo-Protestant	82	34%	74	90%	8	49	60%	25	39%	36%	22%
All Catholics	50	21%	43	85%	7	27	54%	16	29%	47%	20%
Self-identified Christians	190	79%	161	85%	29	105	55%	56	34%	41%	22%
Not Self-Identified Christians	50	21%	38	77%	12	21	42%	17	15%	47%	30%

Source: Custom Analysis by Center for the Study of American Culture & Faith, March 2013, based on Barna Group Data, prepared by George Barna

Intriguing Questions Raised by the 2012 Election and Related Sources of Information

- Given the shifts in preference toward the Republican candidate seen in 2012, was that evidence of gains by Republicans or losses by Democrats?
- Evangelical and conservative Protestant churches are not providing much information or motivation to congregants to vote, or to vote in particular ways. Why not? Is it out of the fear of losing the church's non-profit status, the political ambivalence of church leaders, the fear of polarizing the congregation, the assumption of congregational indifference, the belief that politics and faith should not be mixed, the notion that church and state must be kept completely separate, or some other factors?
- With Mitt Romney receiving a lower percentage of votes from Evangelicals than any candidate since Bob Dole in 1996, does this signal such profound disappointment with Republicans that evangelicals are seeking alternatives to the major party candidates, simply choosing to abstain from voting, or some other form of malaise?
- A consistent 40% of born again voters align with the Democratic candidate. With an increasing number of young born again voters, who tend to lean more toward the liberal end of the continuum, replacing the departed born again adults from the Builder generation, will that permanently tip the scales to the Democratic Party candidate?
- As the "No Faith" segment expands, what are the implications for sociopolitical conservatives?
- The Catholic body has swung from very conservative several decades ago to fairly liberal in recent decades. Will that ideological pendulum begin to swing the other way as record numbers of Hispanic Catholics leave for Protestant churches? And will the presence of those Hispanics in Protestant circles reshape the political patterns of the Protestant world?
- How will evangelicals and non-evangelical born again Christians react to prominent non-white Republican prospective candidates, such as Marco Rubio and Bobby Jindal, in the years to come?
- How will the diminishing public significance of issues that are important to conservative Christians, such as abortion rights and gay marriage, affect the behavior and influence of conservative Christians in future elections?
- Christian churches appeared to play a minimal role in the outcome of the 2008 and 2012 elections? If churches were to step up their engagement, would the electoral outcomes be substantially different?

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