

Post-Election Poll: The Role of Religion and Values

This poll was sponsored by the Center for American Progress, Pax Christi USA, and Res Publica. It was conducted by Zogby International following the election and includes more than 10,000 voters nationwide

I. Voters say America's urgent moral issues are peace, poverty, and greed.

- While exit polls have been interpreted as saying that 22% of the electorate cast their votes based on abortion and gay marriage, a more in-depth analysis shows that most voters are influenced by a broader set of values.
- When voters were asked to list the moral issue that most affected their vote, the Iraq war topped the list (42% of voters) - more than quadruple the number who chose gay marriage (9%). More than half of Kerry voters cited the Iraq war as the most influential moral issue, and over 14% chose poverty.
- When asked to choose the most urgent moral crisis facing America, voters chose 'greed and materialism' (33%) and "poverty and economic justice" (31%) twice as often as abortion (16%) and same sex marriage (12%). Of Kerry voters, 96% chose greed or poverty, while abortion topped the list for Bush voters.
- On the question of the greatest moral crisis, 31% of Catholics chose poverty and 31% greed, while only 20% chose abortion, and 11% same-sex marriage.
- When asked to cite the greatest threat to marriage, 31% of voters cited infidelity, 26% cited rising financial pressures, and 22% same sex marriage.

II. Progressive religious groups close "God Gap" with moderate and liberal voters.

- Progressive religious groups reached 38% of voters this year. While this is about half as many as the religious right reached (71%), it is a major increase over recent years.
- Conservative religious groups may have created more backlash than support. Half of all voters said that messages from religious groups did not affect their vote, but twice as many voters said conservative religious right groups made them more likely to vote for Kerry (33%) than those who felt swayed to vote for Bush (16%). Over 68% of Kerry voters indicated that religious right groups made them less likely to vote for Bush.
- Progressive religious groups, in contrast, were twice as likely to make voters support Kerry (30% of voters) as for Bush (18%).
- Conservative Catholic groups were more likely to make people vote for Kerry (25% of voters) as for Bush (19%). Messages from progressive Catholic groups were more than twice as likely to make people vote for Kerry (26%) as for Bush (12%), again suggesting a significant backlash against conservative groups and positive response to progressive religious groups.

III. Pursuing peace and justice, not using religious rhetoric, is the way for Democrats to reclaim moral leadership

- Non-Kerry voters were asked whether they would have been more likely to vote for Kerry if he spoke more about his faith, and 92% said no. The rest split between positive and negative effects.
- If progressives want to show moral leadership, they should speak to issues of peace, poverty, and greed - all of which concern moderate and liberal voters.
- Half of voters also felt that Bush was likely to put the interests of big corporations ahead of moral values (only 31% felt that way for Kerry). That is another area Democrats might consider providing moral leadership.

How important were your faith and/or values in deciding your vote for President?

	Total %	Bush Votes %	Kerry Votes %	Catholic Voters %	Born-Again Vtrs %
Very important	44.3	55.7	32.6	39.6	74.0
Somewhat important	23.8	26.3	21.3	26.7	19.2
Not important	12.9	11.5	14.4	18.0	3.9
Not at all important	18.8	6.5	31.6	15.8	2.8
Not Sure	.1	.1	.1	--	.1

Which of the following moral issues most influenced your vote in this election?

	Total %	Bush Voters %	Kerry Voters %	Catholic Voters %	Born Again Vtrs %
War in Iraq	42.3	30.7	54.6	41.0	25.4
Abortion	12.8	22.1	3.2	17.2	24.9
Other	13.4	16.1	10.4	10.6	15.9
Same-Sex Marriage	9.3	16.1	2.4	7.7	18.3
Poverty	7.4	.6	14.4	7.6	6.8
None/Not Sure	7.0	10.7	2.9	7.6	4.5
Health Care	5.6	1.7	9.7	6.4	1.9
No Stem Cell Research	2.1	1.9	2.5	2.0	2.3

Which of the following is the most urgent moral problem in American culture?

	Total %	Bush Voters %	Kerry Voters %	Catholic Voters %	Born Again Vtrs %
Greed and materialism	32.6	25.6	39.5	31.1	24.4
Poverty & economic justice	30.5	5.3	56.5	30.8	13.1
Abortion	15.8	30.8	.5	20.3	31.6
Same-sex marriage	12.3	23.4	1.0	10.6	24.9
None/not sure	8.9	14.9	2.5	7.2	5.9

Which of the following is the greatest threat to marriage in America?

	Total %	Bush Voters %	Kerry Voters %	Catholic Voters %	Born Again Vtrs %
Infidelity	30.5	28.0	33.3	30.6	30.6
Rising financial burdens	25.6	9.4	42.5	24.3	11.9
Same-sex marriage	21.6	41.0	1.4	23.8	41.8
Other	11.3	10.5	11.9	10.5	9.9
None/not sure	7.9	5.9	10.0	6.9	3.6
Marriage penalty tax	3.1	5.2	.9	3.8	2.2

Which candidate for President did you think was more likely to put the interests of big corporations ahead of moral values in shaping government policy?

	Total %	Bush Voters (%)	Kerry Voters (%)	Catholic Voters (%)	Born Again Vtrs %
Bush Much More Likely	46.2	1.9	93.0	43.8	20.9
Bush Slightly More Likely	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.9	2.4
Kerry Slightly More Likely	11.0	21.3	.4	12.6	17.3
Kerry Much More Likely	19.5	37.5	.8	18.7	36.1
Neither	13.7	25.4	1.6	15.9	17.0
Both	4.0	6.3	.8	3.5	3.0
Not Sure	2.2	3.9	.4	1.6	3.3

Did the efforts of conservative religious groups focusing on abortion and gay marriage make you more likely to vote for President George W. Bush or more likely to vote for Senator John Kerry, or did it make no difference?

	Total %	Bush Voters %	Kerry Voters %	Catholic Vtrs %	Born again Vtrs %
Much more likely for Bush	11.3	21.6	.5	11.1	27.4
Somewhat more likely for Bush	4.6	8.8	.2	4.9	8.1
Somewhat more likely for Kerry	4.3	.6	8.2	3.7	1.7
Much more likely for Kerry	28.9	.2	59.6	27.0	8.3
No difference	50.6	68.2	31.4	53.1	53.9
Not sure	.3	.5	.1	.2	.5

Did the efforts of liberal religious groups focusing on poverty and the war in Iraq make you more likely to vote for President George W. Bush or more likely to vote for Senator John Kerry, or did it make no difference?

	Total %	Bush Voters%	Kerry Voters %	Catholic Vtrs %	Born Again Vtrs %
Much more likely for Bush	13.9	27.0	.3	13.3	26.7
Somewhat more likely for Bush	4.1	8.0	.1	4.0	6.0
Somewhat more likely for Kerry	6.7	.2	13.5	6.0	3.2
Much more likely for Kerry	23.0	.1	47.7	23.2	8.0
No difference	51.4	64.2	37.4	52.7	55.4

Some conservative groups informed Catholic voters that certain issues, like abortion and stem cell research, were non-negotiable. Did these campaigns make you:

	Total %	Bush Voters%	Kerry Voters %
Much more likely for Bush	12.4	22.7	.2
Somewhat more likely for Bush	6.3	11.4	.4
Somewhat more likely for Kerry	2.4	.3	4.9
Much more likely for Kerry	22.7	.0	49.6
No difference	56.0	65.2	44.9

Some progressive Catholic groups told voters that Catholics should look beyond one issue to consider church teaching on justice and peace. Did these campaigns make you:

	Total %	Bush Voters %	Kerry Voters %
Much more likely for Bush	8.6	15.9	--
Somewhat more likely for Bush	3.4	6.3	--
Somewhat more likely for Kerry	3.8	.2	8.0
Much more likely for Kerry	22.4	.0	49.0
No difference	61.5	77.2	42.5