

The Fifth National Survey of Religion and Politics:

A Baseline for the 2008 Presidential Election

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**RESULTS EMBARGOED UNTIL 3 PM EST
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Summary of Findings

The Fifth National Survey of Religion and Politics finds a remarkable stability in the pattern of American faith-based politics: the presidential candidate preferences of the major religious groups in the summer of 2008 closely resembled the patterns at the comparable stage of the 2004 presidential campaign.

The stability in the presidential preferences of religious groups is surprising given the high level of attention paid to religion by the presidential candidates in 2008.

On the one hand, this stability may reflect deep-seated divisions among America's diverse faith communities. If so, then the 2008 election may be very close, with a high level of religious polarization, and similar to 2004. The overall pattern of opinion on many issues support this possibility.

On the other hand, this stability may reflect the fact that the presidential campaign had not yet reached many religious groups in the summer of 2008. If so, then the fall campaign could alter presidential preferences of the religious groups. Within the overall pattern of stability, there is evidence of shifts in issue priorities that could ultimately affect the faith-based vote.

This report provides a baseline for assessing the impact of the fall campaign on the vote of the major religious groups.

Major findings include:

- In the summer of 2008, Evangelical Protestants supported Republican John McCain at levels approaching their support for George W. Bush in the comparable stage of the 2004 campaign. McCain drew the most support from Traditionalist Evangelicals and less support from Centrist and Modernist Evangelicals. Democrat Barack Obama had made few inroads into the Evangelical vote compared to 2004.
- Mainline Protestants and Non-Latino Catholics were divided in the summer of 2008, with a slight advantage for McCain. However, Traditionalist Catholics were less supportive of the Republican candidate than in 2004. Obama was the choice of Modernist Mainline Protestants and Catholics.
- Obama received strong support from Black Protestants, Latino Catholics, Latino Protestants, and the religiously unaffiliated in 2008, at rates higher than in 2004.

- There was a substantial shift in the issue priorities of religious groups between 2004 and 2008, with economic priorities becoming much prominent, while foreign policy and social issue priorities becoming less prominent.
- Many religious groups were modestly more conservative on some domestic issues in 2008 than in 2004, such as the level of government services and environmental regulation. These shifts tended to reinforce the existing patterns of faith-based politics.
- The Iraq War was less popular among all religious groups in 2008 than in 2004. However, the overall pattern of opinion was largely unchanged. In addition, religious groups' basic view of the role of the United States in world affairs was the same as in 2004.
- Many religious groups were modestly more liberal on some social issues in 2008 compared to 2004, such as marriage and stem cell research. However, the overall pattern of opinion on social issues was largely unchanged from 2004.

The Study

This report is based on the pre-election sample of the Fifth National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted June-August 2008 by the University of Akron. The survey produced a national random sample of 4,017 adult Americans (with a margin of error plus or minus 1.5 percent). The 2008 results are compared where appropriate to the results of previous versions of this survey conducted in 1992, 2000, and 2004.

Detailed Findings

Table 1 and the subsequent tables list the major religious groups in the American public, defined by religious affiliation, and where practicable, religious belief and practice. (For more detail on the definition of these groups and their relative size see the Appendix.)

The largest groups include white and non-Latino Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, non-Latino Catholics, and the religiously unaffiliated population.

The largest groups are divided into three subgroups according to religious beliefs and practices. For Evangelical and Mainline Protestants and Non-Latino Catholics, the three divisions are “traditionalists” (with the most traditional beliefs and practices), “centrists” (with moderate levels of traditional beliefs and practices), and “modernists” (with the least traditional beliefs and practices). Analogous divisions among the Unaffiliated are “unaffiliated believers” (with some traditional beliefs and practices), “seculars” (few beliefs or practices), and self-identified atheists and agnostics.

The remaining groups include the composite categories of Other Christians (Mormons, Eastern Orthodox), Liberal Faiths (Unitarians, New Age), and Other World Religions

(Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus) as well as Jews, Black Protestants, Latino Protestants and Latino Catholics.

Table 1 Religious Groups and Presidential Preferences, Summer 2008*

	<i>McCain</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Obama</i>	Net GOP
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	57.2	22.9	19.9	37.3
<i>Traditionalist</i>	71.6	18.6	9.8	61.8
<i>Centrist</i>	53.9	20.5	25.6	28.3
<i>Modernist</i>	35.6	36.1	28.3	7.3
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	43.2	17.3	39.5	3.7
<i>Traditionalist</i>	56.1	17.2	26.8	29.3
<i>Centrist</i>	42.4	18.4	39.2	3.2
<i>Modernist</i>	35.0	16.4	48.7	-13.7
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	44.1	16.5	39.4	4.7
<i>Traditionalist</i>	46.0	16.9	37.1	8.9
<i>Centrist</i>	52.1	14.4	33.5	18.6
<i>Modernist</i>	36.5	17.9	45.6	-9.1
OTHER CHRISTIANS	48.3	26.2	25.5	22.8
LIBERAL FAITHS	17.3	15.4	67.3	-50.0
LATINO PROTESTANT	33.3	18.3	48.4	-15.1
LATINO CATHOLIC	18.8	21.1	60.2	-41.4
BLACK PROTESTANT	5.6	15.8	78.7	-73.1
JEWS	23.0	24.6	52.5	-29.5
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	15.8	15.8	68.4	-52.6
UNAFFILIATED	21.3	28.2	50.5	-29.2
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	27.6	33.5	38.9	-11.3
<i>Seculars</i>	20.4	28.3	51.3	-30.9
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	13.1	19.2	67.7	-54.6
ALL	37.4	20.8	41.9	-4.5

* Rows add to 100%

Religious Groups and Presidential Preferences, Summer 2008

Table 1 reports the presidential candidate preferences of these religious groups in the summer of 2008. These figures provide a baseline for assessing the impact of the fall campaign on the presidential vote of religious groups.

Overall, Senator Obama led Senator McCain 41.9 percent to 37.4 percent of the respondents, with 20.8 percent undecided (bottom row of Table 1). This composite figure matches the overall pattern of other public opinion polls in the summer of 2008.

Here is where the religious groups stood in terms of presidential candidate preference in the summer of 2008:

Evangelical Protestants favored McCain over Obama as a group, 57.2 to 19.9 percent. However, there were large differences among Evangelicals, with traditionalists backing McCain with 71.6 percent, followed by centrists at 53.9 percent, and modernists at 35.6 percent.

Mainline Protestants were divided overall, modestly favoring McCain 43.2 to 39.5 percent. There were also large differences among Mainline Protestants, with traditionalists backing McCain with 56.1 percent, followed by centrists at 42.4 percent, and modernists at 35.0 percent. Obama was favored by modernists with 48.7 percent.

Non-Latino Catholics were also divided overall, favoring McCain 44.1 to 39.4 percent. Among Non-Latino Catholics, centrists were McCain's strongest group, with 52.1 percent, and they were ahead of the traditionalists in support for McCain, at 46.0 percent. Modernists gave McCain 36.5 percent of their support. Obama led among Modernist Catholics with 45.5 percent.

The composite category of **Other Christians** favored McCain over Obama 48.3 to 25.5 percent, while the composite category of **Liberal Faiths** favored Obama over McCain 67.3 to 17.3 percent.

Obama received strong support from **Latino Protestants** (48.4 percent), **Latino Catholics** (60.2 percent), and **Black Protestants** (78.7 percent). Obama also led among **Jews** (52.5 percent) and **Other World Religions** (68.4 percent).

The **Unaffiliated** favored Obama over McCain, 50.5 percent to 21.3 percent. There were also differences among the Unaffiliated, with Unaffiliated Believers backing Obama with 38.9 percent, Seculars with 51.3 percent, and Atheists-Agnostics with 67.7 percent.

The final column in Table 1 presents the net Republican support for each of these religious groups, calculated by subtracting the Obama support from the McCain support. (A positive number means that the group on balance backed McCain and a negative number means the group on balance supported Obama).

Note that on balance McCain's strongest supporters were **Traditionalist Evangelical Protestants** (61.8 percent) and the strongest of Obama's supporters were **Black Protestants** (73.1 percent). The other groups were arrayed in between, with some closely divided between the candidates. The group closest to an even division was **Centrist Mainline Protestants** (3.2 percent). Overall, these figures reveal considerable polarization in faith-based politics

Remarkable Stability: Comparing 2008 to 2004

The figures in Table 1 for the summer of 2008 are remarkably similar to the comparable stage in the 2004 presidential campaign (the spring of 2004). As Table 2 shows, President George W. Bush led Senator John Kerry by 2.2 percent at that stage of the 2004 campaign (bottom row of Table 2).

Overall, McCain's support from Evangelical Protestants in 2008 approached Bush's support in 2004 (57.2 to 60.4 percent). And there was a similar pattern among traditionalist, centrists and modernists. The biggest difference was among modernists (35.6 percent for McCain and 45.0 percent for Bush). Obama's support among Evangelical Protestants in the summer 2008 was not very different from Kerry's in 2004.

The overall patterns for Mainline Protestants in 2008 were very much like 2004. For Mainline Protestants, and the divisions among traditionalists, centrists, and modernists were comparable. Obama had obtained a small gain among modernist Mainliners, a group that backed Kerry in 2004.

Among Non-Latino Catholics there was a substantial change: McCain received less support among Traditionalist Catholics than Bush (46.0 to 55.3 percent), and at the same time, McCain did better among Centrist Catholics as well (52.1 to 39.0 percent). This reversal extended to Obama support, with Obama doing better than Kerry among Traditionalist Catholics (37.1 to 26.8 percent) and less well than Kerry among Centrist Catholics (33.5 to 41.3 percent).

In 2008, McCain was ahead of Bush among the composite category of **Other Christians** (48.3 to 40.5 percent), and Obama was ahead of Kerry among the composite category of **Liberal Faiths** (67.3 to 51.1 percent).

Obama was also ahead among **Latino Protestants** (48.4 to 25.7 percent); **Latino Catholics** (60.2 to 43.6 percent); and **Black Protestants** (78.7 percent to 48.9 percent). Many of these gains reflect a lower level of undecided voters in the summer of 2008 compared to the spring of 2004. One of the changes is the shift of Latino Protestants from the Republicans in 2004 to the Democrats in 2008.

Obama also received more support than Kerry among the **Unaffiliated** overall (50.5 to 46.5 percent), on the strength of improved support among Seculars (51.3 to 47.1 percent), and Atheists-Agnostics (67.7 to 57.6 percent). Obama's support was down compared to

Kerry among Jews (52.5 to 69.3 percent) and about the same among the Unaffiliated Believers (about 38 percent).

The last column in Table 2 also reports the net Republican support by the religious groups in 2004. Note how similar the patterns are to the comparable figures in Table 1 for 2008, suggesting that the faith-based polarization in the spring of 2004 largely persisted in the summer of 2008.

Table 2: Religious Groups and Presidential Preferences, Spring 2004*

	<i>Bush</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Kerry</i>	Net GOP
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	60.4	20.1	19.6	40.8
<i>Traditionalist</i>	77.6	11.3	11.1	66.5
<i>Centrist</i>	50.8	27.3	21.9	28.9
<i>Modernist</i>	45.0	23.7	31.3	13.7
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	42.4	18.5	39.1	3.3
<i>Traditionalist</i>	54.0	16.7	29.3	24.7
<i>Centrist</i>	41.9	19.4	38.7	3.2
<i>Modernist</i>	35.0	19.1	45.9	-10.9
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	41.3	16.5	42.2	-0.9
<i>Traditionalist</i>	55.3	17.9	26.8	28.5
<i>Centrist</i>	39.0	19.7	41.3	-2.3
<i>Modernist</i>	33.2	11.2	55.6	-22.4
OTHER CHRISTIANS LIBERAL FAITHS	40.5 21.3	40.5 27.7	19.0 51.1	21.5 -29.8
LATINO PROTESTANT	49.5	24.8	25.7	23.8
LATINO CATHOLIC	29.1	27.4	43.5	-14.4
BLACK PROTESTANT	13.6	37.4	49.0	-35.4
JEWS	25.3	5.3	69.4	-44.1
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	17.9	21.4	60.7	-42.8
UNAFFILIATED	23.4	30.1	46.5	-23.1
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	26.6	35.4	38.0	-11.4
<i>Seculars</i>	25.1	27.9	47.1	-22.0
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	14.4	28.1	57.5	-43.1
ALL	39.4	23.4	37.2	2.2

* Rows add to 100%

Looking Back: Comparing 2008 to 2000 and 1992

The relative stability of the presidential preferences of religious groups between 2004 and 2008 is surprising given the high level of attention paid to religion by the presidential candidates in the early stages of the 2008 campaign.

One possible explanation for this stability in faith-based politics is deep-seated political divisions among America's diverse faith communities. In fact, the 2008 patterns in Table 1 appear to represent the continuation trends than began in the 1990s. Table 3 shows this pattern by comparing the net Republican support in 2008 (from Table 1) to 2000 and 1992.

As in 2008, there was no incumbent president on the ballot in 2000, and then Texas Governor George W. Bush was running against Vice-President Al Gore. During the comparable pre-election stage (spring of 2000), Bush led Gore overall by 4.1 percentage points.

Note the similarity in the pattern of net Republican support in 2008 and 2000, with the 2008 numbers reflecting an increase in the differences among the major religious groups, especially between traditionalists and modernists.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush faced a tough re-election bid and was quite unpopular at the comparable stage of the campaign (spring of 1992), trailing by 9.2 percentage points.

Note how different the pattern of net Republican support was compared to 2008. The patterns of faith-based politics evident in 2008 and 2004 appear to have developed since 1992.

Table 3 Religious Groups and Net GOP Support, 2008, 2000, and 1992

	2008	2000	1992
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	37.3	32.1	5.3
<i>Traditionalist</i>	61.8	52.1	20.8
<i>Centrist</i>	28.3	14.9	0.7
<i>Modernist</i>	7.3	20.8	-10.1
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	3.7	15.9	0.0
<i>Traditionalist</i>	29.3	28.7	5.6
<i>Centrist</i>	3.2	14.3	-3.3
<i>Modernist</i>	-13.7	8.4	0.4
NON-LATIONO CATHOLIC	4.7	2.2	-11.1
<i>Traditionalist</i>	9.0	9.7	-16.0
<i>Centrist</i>	18.6	0	-5.9
<i>Modernist</i>	-9.0	-0.9	-12.4
OTHER CHRISTIANS	22.8	14.8	-19.6
LIBERAL FAITHS	-50.0	-23.8	-50.0
LATINO PROTESTANT	-15.1	-2.6	-5.8
LATINO CATHOLIC	-41.4	-11.9	-5.5
BLACK PROTESTANT	-73.1	-40.4	-29.4
JEWS	-29.5	-41.1	-18.2
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	-52.6	-17.6	-33.3
UNAFFILIATED	-29.2	-11.6	-22.4
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	-11.2	-23.3	-3.4
<i>Seculars</i>	-30.9	-22.6	-12.8
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	-54.6	-22.4	-18.9
ALL	-4.5	4.1	-9.2

A Closer Look: Presidential Preferences in 2008

Another possible explanation for the stability of faith-based politics is that the 2008 presidential campaign had not yet reached many religious people.

With this possibility in mind, Table 4 takes a closer look at the 2008 presidential preferences of the religious groups, breaking the responses into six categories: strong McCain supporters; weak McCain supporters; respondents who were undecided but leaned toward McCain or Obama; those who were completely undecided; weak Obama supporters; and strong Obama supporters.

Overall, Obama had more strong supporters than McCain in the summer of 2008 (29.2 to 23.0 percent). Indeed, McCain's improvement in the opinion polls after the Republican National Convention in September may reflect an increase in the number of strong supporters and gains among respondents who leaned toward McCain.

The figures in Table 4 allow for a more detailed analysis of the presidential preferences of the religious groups and the range of possible outcomes.

Take for example, Evangelical Protestants as a group. If Obama could combine his strong and weak supporters from the summer of 2008 with those who leaned Obama and were undecided, he could obtain 34.8 percent of the Evangelical vote on Election Day—about twelve percentage points more than John Kerry received in 2004.

Likewise, if McCain could combine his strong and weak supporters among Traditionalist Catholics from the summer with those who leaned toward him and the undecided, he could receive 54.7 percent of the votes of Traditionalist Catholics on Election Day. However, in order to get the level of support Bush obtained from this group in 2004, he would need to obtain the support of those who leaned toward Obama and were weak Obama supporters in the summer of 2008.

The figures in Table 4 reveal considerable fluidity in the faith-based vote in 2008. Indeed, if one counts weak McCain and Obama supporters as potentially “persuadable” voters along with “leaners” and undecided, the total approaches one-half of the potential electorate. Thus the patterns of faith-based voting evident in the summer of 2008 could be altered by the fall campaign.

Table 4 Religious Groups and Strength of Presidential Preference, Summer 2008*

	Strong McCain	Weak McCain	Lean McCain	Un-decided	Lean Obama	Weak Obama	Strong Obama
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	37.1	20.0	8.1	6.4	8.4	8.4	11.6
<i>Traditionalist</i>	50.0	21.6	8.0	5.5	5.0	5.5	4.4
<i>Centrist</i>	31.8	22.0	6.6	5.6	8.6	8.1	17.3
<i>Modernist</i>	22.5	12.7	11.3	9.8	14.7	14.7	14.3
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	25.9	17.4	8.3	4.0	4.8	14.2	25.4
<i>Traditionalist</i>	34.2	22.6	8.4	3.9	4.5	11.0	15.5
<i>Centrist</i>	26.3	16.6	8.8	3.7	6.0	13.8	24.8
<i>Modernist</i>	20.4	14.6	8.0	4.4	4.0	16.4	32.2
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	26.3	17.8	5.4	5.2	5.8	14.1	25.4
<i>Traditionalist</i>	28.6	17.5	5.3	3.2	8.5	12.2	24.7
<i>Centrist</i>	34.7	17.4	4.7	3.0	7.2	11.9	21.1
<i>Modernist</i>	18.3	18.3	6.0	8.3	3.3	16.8	29.0
OTHER CHRISTIANS	29.5	18.5	15.1	9.6	2.1	10.3	15.0
LIBERAL FAITHS	11.5	5.8	5.8	5.8	3.8	21.2	46.1
LATINO PROTESTANT	15.9	17.5	3.2	8.7	6.3	11.9	36.5
LATINO CATHOLIC	11.2	7.2	8.2	6.6	6.6	20.7	39.5
BLACK PROTESTANT	2.9	2.3	2.3	5.3	8.2	6.2	72.8
JEWS	14.8	8.2	3.3	6.6	14.8	8.2	44.1
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	1.7	13.8	1.7	8.6	5.2	25.9	43.1
UNAFFILIATED	13.3	8.0	10.4	9.9	7.8	15.5	35.1
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	15.5	11.9	13.7	8.9	10.7	11.3	28.0
<i>Seculars</i>	12.9	7.5	9.7	11.0	7.8	15.4	35.7
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	11.2	2.0	7.1	8.2	3.1	22.4	46.0
ALL	23.0	14.4	7.4	6.5	6.9	12.7	29.1

* Rows add to 100%

A Major Shift: Religious Groups and Issue Priorities

One potential source of change in faith-based voting is a shift in the issue priorities of religious groups. Table 5 reports the economic, foreign policy, and social issue priorities of the religious groups in the summer of 2008; Table 6 presents the same information for 2004.

In each case, the table presents the percentage of each religious group that said a particular kind of issue would be “very important” to their presidential vote, and also the percentage who said it was both “very important” and the “most important” to their vote—listed as “top priority” in Tables 5 and 6.

Economic issues scored highest overall (bottom row in Table 5), with 51.3 percent of the entire sample giving economic issues (such as jobs and taxes) top priority and another 25.2 percent reporting that economic issues were nonetheless very important to their presidential vote.

In contrast, 23.4 percent gave top priority to foreign policy issues (such as the Iraq War and terrorism) and 11.1 percent gave top priority to social issues (such as abortion and same-sex marriage). However, another 47.3 percent said that foreign policy issues were nonetheless very important to their presidential vote, and another 27.2 percent said the same thing about social issues.

These priorities present a contrast with the overall priorities in 2004 (see bottom row in Table 6). In 2004, 27.1 percent of the sample gave top priority to economic issues, 31.9 percent to foreign policy issues, and 19.3 percent to social issues.

All together, the figures in Tables 5 and 6 reveal considerable complexity in the issue priorities across religious groups. How these complex patterns may ultimately influence the results of the 2008 election remains to be seen.

Economic Issue Priorities. The prominence of economic priorities extended to every religious group in Table 5: from Traditionalist Evangelical Protestants to Atheists-Agnostics, every group listed economic issues as top priority. And for most groups such priorities represent a substantial shift from 2004 (see Table 6).

In the summer of 2008, **Black Protestants** (61.5 percent) and **Latino Catholics** (57.9 percent) gave the highest priority to economic issues, while the **Liberal Faiths** (41.5 percent), **Jews** (43.3), and **Evangelical Protestants** (45.6 percent) scored lowest.

There were some systematic differences within the largest religious traditions. Among Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, fewer traditionalists reported economic issues as highest priority compared to centrists and modernists.

Table 5 Religious Groups and Issue Priorities, Summer of 2008

	Economic Issues		Foreign Policy		Social Issues	
	Top Priority	Very Important	Top Priority	Very Important	Top Priority	Very Important
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	45.6	26.0	22.4	46.9	20.4	33.4
<i>Traditionalist</i>	33.2	30.9	19.3	48.7	36.6	38.8
<i>Centrist</i>	51.5	23.5	24.7	48.2	11.6	34.4
<i>Modernist</i>	58.5	21.5	23.9	41.0	5.8	21.4
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	54.4	21.0	24.8	47.2	6.8	17.3
<i>Traditionalist</i>	47.8	22.3	24.8	50.3	15.3	27.4
<i>Centrist</i>	58.5	18.4	25.2	47.7	4.6	14.7
<i>Modernist</i>	55.1	22.7	24.4	44.0	3.1	12.9
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	51.2	24.5	27.7	45.7	7.0	18.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	56.9	24.5	17.6	55.3	18.0	23.3
<i>Centrist</i>	53.0	26.3	34.5	39.6	2.5	20.3
<i>Modernist</i>	46.5	22.9	28.6	44.9	3.6	13.6
OTHER CHRISTIANS LIBERAL FAITHS	47.6	29.7	20.7	38.6	16.6	29.0
	41.5	22.6	37.7	41.8	5.4	28.8
LATINO PROTESTANT	48.4	36.5	18.4	50.4	24.6	19.8
LATINO CATHOLIC	57.9	32.2	23.7	52.6	4.9	44.1
BLACK PROTESTANT	61.5	23.6	16.9	57.1	8.5	40.2
JEWS	43.3	35.0	37.7	41.0	4.9	29.5
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	56.1	26.3	32.8	44.8	3.4	32.8
UNAFFILIATED	51.4	21.8	19.8	50.6	7.0	22.4
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	54.1	21.8	13.5	45.1	8.8	31.2
<i>Seculars</i>	56.7	20.1	20.4	35.4	6.3	18.5
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	30.3	26.3	28.3	27.1	6.1	20.2
ALL	51.3	25.2	23.4	47.3	11.1	27.2

Table 6 Religious Groups and Issue Priorities, Spring 2004

	Economic Issues		Foreign Policy		Social Issues	
	Top Priority	Very Important	Top Priority	Very Important	Top Priority	Very Important
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	18.2	27.7	27.4	46.6	32.4	32.3
<i>Traditionalist</i>	9.8	29.1	25.5	49.0	47.9	33.9
<i>Centrist</i>	25.8	26.3	25.4	46.4	20.1	33.0
<i>Modernist</i>	25.8	26.8	37.1	40.2	13.4	25.8
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	27.4	26.9	34.4	42.4	14.2	26.4
<i>Traditionalist</i>	25.5	25.5	26.4	48.2	23.6	30.0
<i>Centrist</i>	29.6	27.4	39.3	41.5	8.1	25.7
<i>Modernist</i>	26.8	27.5	35.9	38.7	13.4	23.9
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	45.2	27.2	37.3	41.2	14.8	22.6
<i>Traditionalist</i>	17.4	27.8	25.0	49.1	37.9	27.6
<i>Centrist</i>	30.3	27.3	39.2	42.2	6.6	22.9
<i>Modernist</i>	30.9	28.3	44.7	33.6	5.9	19.0
OTHER CHRISTIANS LIBERAL FAITHS	18.6	42.4	29.3	53.4	31.6	31.6
	7.1	57.1	58.6	27.6	17.2	27.6
LATINO PROTESTANT	36.5	11.5	11.3	54.7	26.4	26.4
LATINO CATHOLIC	39.8	28.4	25.3	47.1	13.8	25.3
BLACK PROTESTANT	48.1	28.0	11.2	60.3	12.6	33.6
JEWS	27.1	41.7	43.8	43.8	6.3	41.7
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	14.3	28.6	45.0	40.0	16.0	24.0
UNAFFILIATED	28.6	33.1	43.0	37.3	12.6	24.9
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	38.6	25.7	26.1	60.9	15.5	19.7
<i>Seculars</i>	26.3	34.6	46.4	33.5	12.8	24.4
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	25.7	35.6	49.5	27.7	9.9	29.7
ALL	27.1	29.2	31.9	44.7	19.3	28.0

However, among Non-Latino Catholics this pattern was reversed, with more traditionalists reporting economic issue priorities than the centrists or modernists. A similar pattern occurred for the Unaffiliated, with the Atheists-Agnostics reporting fewer economic priorities than the Unaffiliated Believers.

Foreign Policy Priorities. The religious groups showed more complex patterns on foreign policy priorities. While most groups reported a decline in the percentage naming foreign policy as a top priority, some groups showed an increase, such as Centrist Evangelicals and Mainline Protestants.

In addition, many groups reported large percentages of respondents who regarded foreign policy as “very important” to their vote in addition to the percentage who gave it top priority. Indeed, if these two columns are added together, the foreign policy priorities of many groups rival the importance of economic issue priorities.

In the summer of 2008, **Jews** (37.7 percent), **Liberal Faiths** (37.7 percent), and **Centrist Catholics** (34.5 percent) ranked first in giving top priority to foreign policy, while **Black Protestants** (16.9 percent), **Traditionalist Catholics** (17.6 percent), and **Latino Protestants** (18.9 percent) ranked last.

Social Issue Priorities. In 2008, social issue priorities ranked lower for almost every religious group—even among Evangelical Protestants and the traditionalist groups—compared to 2004. Note however, that the traditionalist groups scored the highest with social issues as top priority as well as being very important to their vote.

In the summer of 2008, **Traditionalist Evangelicals and Latino Protestants** had the most members with social issue priorities (36.6 and 24.6 percent, respectively), while **Modernist Mainline Protestants and Other World Religions** scored lowest (3.1 and 3.4 percent, respectively).

Modest Shift to the Right: Government Services and Environmental Regulation

The increased priority of economic issues across religious groups could produce a change in the vote of religious groups in 2008. While such a shift may occur in the fall campaign, there was little evidence of such a shift in the summer of 2008.

Table 7 offers one possible reason why such a change may not have occurred. Between 2004 and 2008, there was a slight shift in a conservative direction in opinion on the level of government services. Here respondents were asked if they preferred “fewer public services and reduce public spending” versus “more public services and higher public spending,” with the mid-point no change in the level of services and spending.

In both 2008 and 2004, the plurality position overall was “no change” in the level of government services (37.0 and 39.6 percent, respectively). However, the number of respondents who preferred fewer services and spending increased to 33.6 percent in 2008

from 27.8 percent in 2004. While this change was small, it was concentrated in religious groups that supported the Republicans in 2004, especially Evangelical Protestants.

A few exceptions to this pattern are intriguing: Traditionalist Catholics moved in an opposite direction, with fewer wanting a reduction in government services. An even larger shift in this direction occurred among Latino Protestants and Atheist-Agnostics. Interestingly, these were among the religious groups that showed the most change in candidate preference between 2004 and 2008.

In the summer of 2008, **Traditionalist Evangelicals** scored the highest on reducing government services and spending (53.4 percent), while **Black Protestants** were the most supportive of increasing government services and spending (54.6 percent).

A similar pattern occurred for opinion on environmental regulation. Table 8 reports responses to the statement: “Strict rules to protect the environment are necessary even if they cost jobs or result in higher prices.” On this question, there was very little overall change between 2004 and 2008, with more than one-half of the respondents agreeing with the statement in both years.

However, there were large declines among some religious groups, including Traditionalist Evangelicals (40.2 in 2008 from 55.2 percent in 2004) and Centrist Catholics (54.0 in 2008 from 62.2 percent in 2004). These declines in support for environmental regulation were offset by increases in support by other groups, such as the Other World Religions, Seculars, and Latino Catholics.

In the summer of 2008, the religious groups most supportive of environmental regulation were the **Other World Religions** (84.5 percent), **Liberal Faiths** (71.7 percent), and **Seculars** (67.8 percent), and the group that was most opposed were **Traditionalist Evangelical Protestants** (40.2 percent).

These findings on the level of governmental services and environmental regulation must be placed in proper context. The questions asked posited a trade-off between desirable things (government services, protecting the environment) against less desirable ones (cost of government, loss of jobs or higher prices). Results of other surveys reveal considerable general support for social welfare programs (such as national health insurance) and environmental values (such as concern with climate change). The findings presented are not inconsistent with such general values, but reflect respondents’ opinion when asked to make difficult choices. These patterns may help explain the stable patterns of faith-based politics in the summer 2008.

Table 7 Religious Groups and Level of Government Services, 2008 and 2004*

	2008			2004		
	<i>Fewer services</i>	<i>No change</i>	<i>More Services</i>	<i>Fewer services</i>	<i>No Change</i>	<i>More Services</i>
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	42.5	36.0	21.5	34.0	38.6	27.4
<i>Traditionalist</i>	53.4	28.6	18.0	44.9	33.3	21.8
<i>Centrist</i>	37.6	39.7	22.7	24.3	45.2	30.5
<i>Modernist</i>	31.0	43.5	25.5	26.2	39.3	34.5
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	35.7	39.2	25.1	29.4	43.2	27.4
<i>Traditionalist</i>	41.7	34.0	24.4	36.8	43.0	20.1
<i>Centrist</i>	33.8	43.7	22.5	32.4	43.2	24.4
<i>Modernist</i>	33.5	38.5	28.1	21.7	43.4	34.9
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	34.3	39.6	26.2	27.7	42.1	30.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	33.5	40.5	25.9	40.3	33.6	26.1
<i>Centrist</i>	38.6	36.9	24.5	26.2	41.5	32.3
<i>Modernist</i>	31.1	41.1	27.8	20.6	48.5	30.9
OTHER CHRISTIANS LIBERAL FAITHS	40.6	40.6	18.8	31.4	38.6	30.0
	34.0	30.2	35.8	6.7	43.3	50.0
LATINO PROTESTANT	21.8	33.6	44.6	30.9	41.2	27.9
LATINO CATHOLIC	17.9	41.4	40.7	13.8	39.7	46.5
BLACK PROTESTANT	23.7	21.8	54.5	21.6	28.8	49.6
JEWS	26.2	39.3	34.5	24.5	30.6	44.9
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	38.6	22.8	38.6	16.2	40.5	43.3
UNAFFILIATED	30.4	40.7	28.9	26.0	41.0	33.0
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	34.1	39.6	26.3	20.0	36.8	43.2
<i>Seculars</i>	32.6	40.1	27.3	25.6	42.7	31.7
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	17.5	43.3	39.2	31.7	37.4	30.9
ALL	33.6	37.0	29.4	27.8	39.6	32.6

* Rows for 2008 and 2004 each add to 100%

Table 8 Religious Groups and Environmental Regulation, 2008 and 2004*

Strict Environmental Regulation

	2008			2004		
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	45.3	13.1	41.6	53.2	15.6	31.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	40.2	14.4	45.5	55.2	12.7	32.1
<i>Centrist</i>	49.1	11.9	39.0	53.7	16.1	30.2
<i>Modernist</i>	48.3	12.7	39.0	46.8	21.8	31.5
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	59.9	13.1	27.0	60.4	18.6	21.0
<i>Traditionalist</i>	58.6	9.6	31.8	55.7	20.0	24.3
<i>Centrist</i>	57.2	15.8	27.0	62.6	18.7	18.7
<i>Modernist</i>	63.6	12.9	23.6	61.4	17.5	21.1
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	58.0	10.8	31.2	63.3	16.1	20.6
<i>Traditionalist</i>	57.4	11.2	31.4	53.7	19.0	27.3
<i>Centrist</i>	54.0	10.2	35.8	62.2	16.2	21.6
<i>Modernist</i>	61.3	11.0	27.7	71.5	13.9	14.6
OTHER CHRISTIANS	51.4	12.5	36.1	55.4	20.3	24.3
LIBERAL FAITHS	71.7	3.8	24.5	75.8	18.2	6.1
LATINO PROTESTANT	55.2	9.6	35.2	53.5	23.9	22.6
LATINO CATHOLIC	64.8	17.1	18.1	48.4	18.5	33.1
BLACK PROTESTANT	44.5	24.2	31.3	43.4	23.9	32.7
JEWS	63.3	11.7	25.0	76.5	7.8	15.7
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	84.5	8.6	6.9	42.1	23.7	34.2
UNAFFILIATED	60.7	15.4	23.9	57.2	20.4	22.4
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	47.0	22.0	31.0	44.9	19.3	35.8
<i>Seculars</i>	67.8	12.9	19.3	58.3	16.6	25.1
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	61.9	11.3	26.8	65.2	23.2	11.6
ALL	55.2	13.9	30.9	56.3	18.3	25.4

* Rows for 2008 and 2004 each add to 100%

Change and Stability: Iraq War and the U.S. Role in the World

The decline in foreign policy priorities across the religious groups could also be a source of change in faith-based voting in 2008. But here too, there was little evidence of such a shift in the summer of 2008, despite changes in opinion on some foreign policy issues.

Table 9 reports opinion of the Iraq War for religious groups in 2004 and 2008. Here respondents were asked if the Iraq war was “completely” or “probably justified” or if the war was “completely” or “probably unjustified.”

Overall, there was a large decline between 2008 and 2004 in positive views of the Iraq War. In the spring of 2004, 57.7 percent of the respondents said that the Iraq War was “justified” and 42.3 percent said it was “unjustified.” By the summer of 2008, the numbers had largely reversed themselves, with 45.6 percent saying the war was “justified” and 54.4 percent saying it was “unjustified.”

This decline extended across all the religious groups. The largest declines were among Traditionalist Catholics, Black Protestants and Atheists-Agnostics, with the smallest declines among the Unaffiliated Believers, Traditionalist Evangelicals and Jews.

However, the increased unpopularity of the Iraq War only modestly altered the overall pattern of opinion across religious groups. In the summer of 2008, Evangelical Protestants remained the most positive toward the Iraq War, and among them, the traditionalists were more positive than the modernists.

Mainline Protestants remained less positive about the Iraq War than Evangelicals, but with the traditionalists more so than the modernists. Likewise, the Unaffiliated remained much less positive, but with the Unaffiliated Believers more so and the Atheists-Agnostics less so.

An exception to this pattern was Traditionalist Catholics: in the summer of 2008 they were the least positive among the Non-Latino Catholic groups, but back in 2004 they were the most positive.

Despite changing views on the Iraq War across religious groups, views of the role of the United States in the world did not change between 2004 and 2008. In both elections, respondents were asked to choose between these statements: “The U.S. has a special role to play in world affairs and should behave differently than other nations” or “The U.S. has no special role and should behave like any other nation.” Table 10 reports the results.

Overall, there was little change on this question, with a small majority of Americans agreeing that the U.S. has a special role in world affairs in 2008 (54.3 percent) and 2004 (55.7 percent), and a large minority saying that the U.S. has no special role (45.7 and 44.3 percent, respectively).

In the summer of 2008, the strong supporters of a special role for the U.S. in the world include **Traditionalist Evangelicals** (74.6 percent), **Latino Protestants** (65.5 percent), **Other Christians** (63.9 percent), and **Jews** (59.0 percent). Meanwhile, the strong supporters of no special role for the U.S. include **Atheists-Agnostics** (69.1 percent), **Seculars** (57.4 percent), **Other World Religions** (54.9 percent), and **Modernist Evangelicals** (54.1 percent). Taken together, these findings suggest that persistent differences among religious groups on foreign policy issues may be one reason for the stability of faith-based politics in the summer of 2008.

Table 9 Religious Groups and the Iraq War, 2008 and 2004*

	2008 War justified	War not justified	2004 War justified	War not justified
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	63.7	36.3	76.2	23.8
<i>Traditionalist</i>	76.8	23.2	85.1	14.9
<i>Centrist</i>	59.2	40.8	74.1	25.9
<i>Modernist</i>	46.5	53.5	62.8	37.2
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	49.2	50.8	60.5	39.5
<i>Traditionalist</i>	60.8	39.2	73.7	26.3
<i>Centrist</i>	51.4	48.6	61.8	38.2
<i>Modernist</i>	39.0	61.0	50.6	49.4
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	49.7	50.3	59.2	40.8
<i>Traditionalist</i>	46.8	53.2	69.5	30.5
<i>Centrist</i>	53.0	47.0	58.9	41.1
<i>Modernist</i>	48.8	51.2	51.4	48.6
OTHER CHRISTIANS LIBERAL FAITHS	65.2	34.8	66.7	33.3
	19.6	80.4	40.0	60.0
LATINO PROTESTANT	50.4	49.6	65.7	34.3
LATINO CATHOLIC	33.2	66.8	48.9	51.1
BLACK PROTESTANT	14.1	85.9	34.9	65.1
JEWS	31.7	68.3	39.7	60.3
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	10.5	89.5	23.2	76.8
UNAFFILIATED	32.1	67.9	44.8	55.2
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	48.5	51.5	48.7	51.3
<i>Seculars</i>	29.6	70.4	48.0	52.0
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	11.5	88.5	30.9	69.1
ALL	45.6	54.4	57.7	42.3

* Rows for 2008 and 2004 each add to 100%

Table 10 Religious Groups and U.S. Role in the World, 2008 and 2004*

	2008 SPECIAL ROLE	<i>NO SPECIAL ROLE</i>	2004 SPECIAL ROLE	<i>NO SPECIAL ROLE</i>
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	63.2	36.8	63.5	36.5
<i>Traditionalist</i>	74.6	25.4	74.2	25.8
<i>Centrist</i>	60.8	39.2	57.1	42.9
<i>Modernist</i>	45.9	54.1	54.8	45.2
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	53.2	46.8	54.8	45.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	60.3	39.7	62.1	37.9
<i>Centrist</i>	55.3	44.7	51.4	48.6
<i>Modernist</i>	46.6	53.4	52.8	47.2
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	53.4	46.6	55.4	44.6
<i>Traditionalist</i>	54.3	45.7	61.3	38.7
<i>Centrist</i>	61.5	38.5	49.8	50.2
<i>Modernist</i>	46.4	53.6	58.3	41.7
OTHER CHRISTIANS LIBERAL FAITHS	63.9	36.1	56.6	43.4
	51.0	49.0	65.2	34.8
LATINO PROTESTANT	65.5	34.5	52.0	48.0
LATINO CATHOLIC	49.5	50.5	58.7	41.3
BLACK PROTESTANT	46.2	53.8	53.4	46.6
JEWS	59.0	41.0	72.2	27.8
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	45.1	54.9	42.6	57.4
UNAFFILIATED	44.5	55.5	45.5	54.5
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	56.6	43.4	38.6	61.4
<i>Seculars</i>	42.6	57.4	47.6	52.4
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	30.9	69.1	49.3	50.7
ALL	54.3	45.7	55.7	44.3

* Rows for 2008 and 2004 each add to 100%

Modest Shift to the Left: Marriage and Stem Cell Research

The decline in social issue priorities among religious groups could also be a source of change in faith-based voting in 2008. Although there was a modest shift in opinion on some social issues in the summer of 2008, the overall pattern of opinion social issues was much the same as in 2004.

Table 11 reports views of the legal status of marriage in 2008 and 2004. The respondents were offered three options: traditional marriage (legal recognition of unions between one man and one woman); civil unions (legal recognition of same-sex relationships short of marriage); and same-sex marriage.

Overall, there was a modest decline in support for traditional marriage and small increases in support for civil unions and same-sex marriage. In the summer of 2008, 49.9 percent of the respondents favored traditional marriage compared to 54.9 percent in 2004. Support for civil unions rose to 19.6 percent from 17.5 percent, and support for same-sex marriage rose to 30.4 percent from 27.6 percent.

These changes occurred in most of the religious groups, including Evangelical Protestants and among the traditionalist groups. Indeed, some of the largest changes occurred among Traditionalist Mainline Protestants and Traditionalist Catholics (18.6 and 14.5 percentage-point declines in support for traditional marriage, respectively).

Despite these changes, the basic pattern of opinion on marriage in 2008 remained largely unchanged from 2004. Evangelical Protestants were the most supportive of traditional marriage, with Non-Latino Catholics and Mainline Protestants markedly less supportive, and the Unaffiliated the least. And within the major Christian traditions, the traditionalists were always the most supportive of traditional marriage, followed by the centrists and modernists. And there were analogous differences among the Unaffiliated Believers, Seculars, and Atheists-Agnostics.

In the summer of 2008, **Traditionalist Evangelicals** were the most supportive of traditional marriage (86.6 percent), followed by **Latino Protestants** (69.6 percent), **Other Christians** (69.2 percent), and **Black Protestants** (65.6 percent). **Atheists-Agnostics** were the most supportive of same-sex marriage (72.4 percent), followed by **Seculars** (60.6 percent), **Liberal Faiths** (59.6 percent), and **Other World Religions** (56.9 percent).

Table 11 reports a modest change in attitudes toward embryonic stem cell research. The respondents were asked if all such research should be banned. In 2008, 24.8 percent agreed with this statement, down from 32.5 percent in 2004. Meanwhile, 59.7 percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement, up from 52.8 percent in 2004.

This change in opinion was fairly uniform across the religious groups, with even the traditionalists becoming less opposed to this kind of stem cell research. This pattern

extended to Traditionalist Catholics as well. However, as with the view of marriage, the basic pattern of opinion across religious groups found in 2004 persisted in 2008.

Table 11 Religious Groups and Marriage, 2008 and 2004*

	2008			2004		
	<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Civil</i>	<i>Same-sex</i>	<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Civil</i>	<i>Same-sex</i>
	<i>Marriage</i>	<i>Unions</i>	<i>Marriage</i>	<i>Marriage</i>	<i>Unions</i>	<i>Marriage</i>
EVANGELICAL						
PROTESTANT	70.0	15.7	14.4	75.9	12.3	11.8
<i>Traditionalist</i>	86.6	10.6	2.8	90.1	6.9	3.0
<i>Centrist</i>	68.1	20.8	11.1	73.4	14.8	11.8
<i>Modernist</i>	42.0	15.6	42.4	52.4	18.1	29.5
MAINLINE						
PROTESTANT	36.2	28.9	34.9	47.8	27.5	24.7
<i>Traditionalist</i>	57.1	30.1	12.8	75.7	19.7	4.6
<i>Centrist</i>	33.2	28.6	38.2	45.4	27.3	27.3
<i>Modernist</i>	24.9	28.4	46.7	30.8	32.8	36.4
NON-LATINO						
CATHOLIC	39.6	29.2	31.2	47.6	21.7	30.7
<i>Traditionalist</i>	58.4	22.7	18.9	72.9	16.9	10.2
<i>Centrist</i>	40.9	34.0	25.1	51.0	22.5	26.5
<i>Modernist</i>	27.0	29.3	43.7	22.6	24.4	53.0
OTHER						
CHRISTIANS	69.2	11.6	19.2	76.6	8.1	15.3
LIBERAL FAITHS	17.3	23.1	59.6	23.4	23.4	53.2
LATINO						
PROTESTANT	69.6	12.0	18.4	73.1	6.7	20.2
LATINO						
CATHOLIC	56.4	12.1	31.5	52.0	13.6	34.4
BLACK						
PROTESTANT	65.5	11.1	23.4	72.7	9.4	17.9
JEWS	24.6	21.3	54.1	15.8	28.9	55.3
OTHER WORLD						
RELIGIONS	32.8	10.3	56.9	33.3	17.5	49.2
UNAFFILIATED	28.3	18.0	53.7	31.5	18.5	50.0
<i>Unaffiliated</i>						
<i>believers</i>	53.5	16.5	30.0	51.3	14.3	34.4
<i>Seculars</i>	18.9	20.5	60.6	28.9	20.4	50.7
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	14.3	13.3	72.4	11.5	19.4	69.1
ALL	49.9	19.6	30.5	54.9	17.5	27.6

* Rows for 2008 and 2004 each add to 100%

These patterns fit with the results of other surveys, which show a great deal of stability in opinion on many social issues. For example, most surveys find very little change in attitudes on abortion in the last four years. This overall pattern may help explain the stability of faith-based politics in the summer of 2008, despite some modest shifts in opinion on particular issues.

Table 12 Religious Groups and Stem Cell Research, 2008 and 2004

Ban Embryonic Stem Research

	2008			2004		
	Agree	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Agree	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	32.5	17.1	50.4	41.5	14.7	43.8
<i>Traditionalist</i>	43.1	15.0	41.9	54.1	11.7	34.2
<i>Centrist</i>	28.3	17.2	54.5	37.9	18.3	43.8
<i>Modernist</i>	20.1	20.6	59.3	23.2	13.8	63.0
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	17.2	14.3	68.5	26.0	16.3	57.7
<i>Traditionalist</i>	29.3	11.5	59.2	38.2	19.7	42.1
<i>Centrist</i>	12.9	20.7	66.4	23.5	14.7	61.8
<i>Modernist</i>	12.8	9.7	77.5	19.7	15.7	64.6
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	22.8	11.3	65.9	32.6	13.2	54.2
<i>Traditionalist</i>	35.6	12.2	52.2	53.4	13.2	33.4
<i>Centrist</i>	22.1	8.5	69.4	32.9	13.6	53.5
<i>Modernist</i>	15.1	12.8	72.1	15.1	12.8	72.1
OTHER CHRISTIANS	27.8	20.8	51.4	34.9	22.6	42.5
LIBERAL FAITHS	13.2	17.0	69.8	2.1	6.4	91.5
LATINO PROTESTANT	32.5	16.7	50.8	38.6	17.8	43.6
LATINO CATHOLIC	36.6	15.8	47.6	33.3	18.6	48.1
BLACK PROTESTANT	23.2	21.5	55.3	50.4	13.0	36.6
JEWS	13.1	11.5	75.4	9.3	6.7	84.0
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	32.8	12.1	55.2	29.1	7.3	63.6
UNAFFILIATED	14.5	16.4	69.2	19.9	14.6	65.5
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	18.9	25.4	55.7	36.7	16.0	47.3
<i>Seculars</i>	11.0	15.7	73.3	16.2	15.1	68.7
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	17.3	2.0	80.7	7.2	11.5	81.3
ALL	24.6	15.8	59.6	32.5	14.7	52.8

* Rows for 2008 and 2004 each add to 100%

Appendix: Religious Categories

The Surveys. This report is primarily based on the pre-election sample of the Fifth National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted by the Bliss Institute at the University of Akron. A national random sample of adult Americans (18 years or older) was interviewed in June, July, and August of 2008. The total number of cases was 4,000 and the margin of error is plus or minus 1.5 percent. Similar surveys were taken in the spring of 1992, 1996, and 2000. The previous surveys were supported by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts, and in 2004, the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Defining the Religious Categories. The religious categories used in this report were derived from measures of religious belonging, believing, and behaving. (For more details on the construction of these measures, contact John Green, the Bliss Institute, green@uakron.edu.).

The first step was to use the detailed denominational affiliation data collected in the survey to sort respondents into religious traditions. Ambiguous categories (such as “just a Christian”) were sorted with the aid of other religious measures. Latino Protestants and Catholics and Black Protestants were then placed in separate categories because of their religious and political distinctiveness.

The remaining portions of the three major traditions were then broken into traditionalists, centrists, and modernists based on three sets of measures. First, six belief measures (belief in God, belief in an afterlife, views of the Bible, the existence of the devil, evolution, and the truth of all the world’s religions) were combined into a single scale running from the most traditional beliefs to the most modern. Second, five measures of religious behavior (worship attendance, financial support of a congregation, private prayer, scripture reading, and participation in small groups) and the salience of religion were combined into a single scale running from the lowest to highest level of religious engagement. Third, the belief and behavior scales were combined and then divided into three groups based on high, medium, and low levels of religious salience.

The respondents that reported no religious affiliation were subdivided into analogous categories. The Unaffiliated Believers were those with the same level of belief as the Centrists in the three largest traditions. Atheists and Agnostics were defined by self-identification, and the Seculars were the residual category.

While these categories are certainly not definitive, they do capture important religious groups in the American public. Table 13 lists the size of the categories in the 2008 survey and some religious characteristics: percent that reported certain belief in a personal God; attending worship weekly or more often; and the highest level of religious salience.

Table 13 Size and Characteristics of Major Religious Groups, 2008

	<i>% POP</i>	<i>% Believe in Personal God</i>	<i>Weekly Worship Attendance</i>	<i>Highest Religious Salience</i>	<i>N of Cases</i>
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT	25.0	64.5	58.8	60.4	999
<i>Traditionalist</i>	10.0	82.2	98.0	83.0	398
<i>Centrist</i>	9.9	68.2	44.8	62.0	396
<i>Modernist</i>	5.1	22.8	8.7	13.7	205
MAINLINE PROTESTANT	15.0	40.9	35.4	34.0	600
<i>Traditionalist</i>	3.9	78.2	78.3	69.4	157
<i>Centrist</i>	5.4	46.8	32.5	34.9	217
<i>Modernist</i>	5.6	9.7	8.0	8.9	226
NON-LATINO CATHOLIC	18.1	41.9	48.3	32.0	726
<i>Traditionalist</i>	4.7	72.9	89.4	62.4	189
<i>Centrist</i>	5.9	48.7	56.4	38.0	236
<i>Modernist</i>	7.5	17.6	16.6	8.3	301
OTHER CHRISTIANS	3.6	73.8	73.1	64.1	145
LIBERAL FAITHS	1.3	13.2	32.1	25.0	53
LATINO PROTESTANT	3.1	57.1	57.9	73.6	126
LATINO CATHOLIC	7.6	35.5	41.6	49.7	304
BLACK PROTESTANT	8.6	47.4	61.1	65.5	342
JEWS	1.5	18.0	26.2	21.3	61
OTHER WORLD RELIGIONS	1.4	5.2	27.1	29.3	58
UNAFFILIATED	14.7	15.8	10.4	11.4	588
<i>Unaffiliated believers</i>	4.2	51.8	28.6	35.3	170
<i>Seculars</i>	8.0	1.6	2.5	1.9	318
<i>Atheist agnostic</i>	2.5	0.0	5.0	1.0	100
ALL	100.0	44.0	44.4	42.8	4000