

2008 FALL SYMPOSIUM
ONE NATION UNDER GOD?
The Role of Religion in American Public Life
November 22, 2008, Robsham Theater, Boston College

SESSION 2: Religion and Electoral Politics

CULLEN MURPHY: My name is Cullen Murphy. I'm an editor at *Vanity Fair* magazine, and I'm here to introduce the second session of the day on religion and electoral politics.



Cullen Murphy

A few weeks ago I happened to be speaking with the man who used to run the Office of Faith-based Initiatives in the Bush White House. And he was saying that appearances can be deceiving. From the outside, he said, many people looking at the Bush White House saw a tightly meshed alliance of political and evangelical conservatives. From the inside, it looked very different. The camps were often mutually suspicious, even hostile, and their interests frequently diverged. When doors were closed, they used unflattering epithets about each other, even taking the Lord's name in vain.

The intersection of religion and American politics on both left and right goes back as far as you can see, and it's not a simple story. We've just concluded a political season marbled with religious issues, from controversial pastors and divisive ballot issues to soaring rhetoric that draws on our most sacred imagery.

So here, to help us make sense of all this, is a distinguished panel, and our moderator, Hanna Rosin, here to my left, who knows her way round the subject like very few others. Hanna Rosin is a contributing editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, a wonderful publication of which I myself am an alum. She has written for such publications as the *Washington Post*, the *New Yorker*, and *New York Magazine*, and her most recent book is *God's Harvard: A Christian College on a Mission to Save America*. And it's probably safe to say that she's the only person in this room who has been played in the movies by Chlöe Sevigny. Ladies and gentlemen, Hanna Rosin. (applause)

ROSIN: We'll leave that as a trivia question. You get bonus points if you can guess what he's talking about after the panel, we'll take the answers.

So I'm going to introduce the rest of the panel from left to right here. Sitting next to me is Steve Waldman, who is an old friend, and the founder and

Editor-in-Chief of *Beliefnet*, and he is a person who's both a Web person and an old print person. He's also written for *US News and World Report* and *Newsweek*, among other publications. His latest book is called *Founding Faith: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America*, and it is really the definitive take on the founding fathers and their religion, and exactly what it looked like and didn't look like, and a fabulous book.



Hanna Rosin

Next to him is Amy Sullivan. She writes a column for *Time* magazine, which I read every week, because it comes to my e-mail. And her new book is *The Party Faithful: How and Why Democrats Are Closing the God Gap*, and she is really the definitive voice on, I guess we would call it the religious left, or even the evangelical left, which has been emerging more and more in the last few years.

Bishop Harry Jackson, who has the distinction of being the only person on this panel, and probably every panel, of having published two books this year, both of which are incredibly relevant to the current moment. He's the senior pastor of Hope Christian Church in Washington, DC, and a very important figure in the national African-American churches. And his two books are called – one is called *Personal Faith, Public Policy*, which is exactly on the topic that we're discussing today, which is religion in the public landscape, and the second is called *The Truth in Black and White: A New Look at the Shifting Landscape of Race, Religion, and Politics in America Today*, also highly relevant.

So those are our panelists. I want to start by saying that the reason I'm so happy to be here talking about these subjects is, I've written about what we commonly call the religious right for many, many years, and I feel like everything I've taken for granted during my writing career is no longer true. And I'm trying to figure out what is true now. And what I mean by that is that a panel that I would have been on two years ago, I would have been able to say many things like, religion is a great predictor of people's voting habits, that the Democratic party is not a home for evangelicals, that African-Americans and Democrats sort of vote together on many important issues. And also, that religion in the public square is a sort of possibly threatening and at least very controversial idea. And I feel like all of those things that I've taken for granted during my career writing about this are not true, or are different this year. And so that's the area that I want to discuss, and sort of go back to some of the things they've talked about in the previous panel.

And I want to start with Amy, because Amy's been writing about this, evangelicals on the left, for such a long time. What – it seemed when I was reading you a few years ago, I almost didn't believe you. Like you talked about this budding movement, and I thought– that would be very nice for

you if that happened, but it's not going to happen. (laughter) And here it is. And so I just want to ask you what you think happened in the electoral dynamics, and what it means that this movement now exists – or does it exist?

SULLIVAN: Well, I'll admit, I had some questions myself as I was writing about it



Amy Sullivan

over the last few years. And I just had to keep coming back to the fact that I grew up in a home where we had portraits of Jesus and of Bobby Kennedy hanging on our walls. I was an evangelical in a very Democratic home. And so for me, there'd never been any conflict between the two going together. That obviously isn't the public face that we've seen of evangelicalism over the last two or three decades, really. But it never really went away, the existence of a few kind of sad and lonely liberal

evangelicals.

But what we've seen changing over the last few years, I think, is a broadening of the agenda within the evangelical community itself. And that has happened, in a way, kind of independent of electoral politics, although the two parties have had to react to it, or not, I think. Some of what we've seen on the Republican side has been, if not a failure to respond to new issues the evangelicals care about, whether it's "creation care," which is the phrase for policies to protect the environment, opposition to torture, increased support among evangelicals for something like universal healthcare or more spending on welfare programs, which we just didn't see as much a few years ago. These have entered onto the political landscape, and the question is how the parties will respond.

And there are a few things from this recent campaign that can get us going on that question. One is that, although I hate to disagree with Mr. Meacham, because even though he can slight my magazine, *Time* magazine, given our ever-shrinking budget and personnel, I may be asking him for a job in a few weeks. (laughter) But I do actually think that this election was maybe less of a turning point than it appears, largely because of the just overwhelming role of the economy, and the way that it trumped a lot of other factors in the minds of religious voters. I think primarily you saw this in the Catholic vote, which switched, and Barack Obama won a majority of Catholic votes this year. But I think it also played a role in specific states for evangelical voters as well. And so we don't yet know in 2012, say, if the economy's doing much better, whether social issues will again kind of rise and be more of a factor with these voters.

But we do know that in a few states where Democrats really put their efforts this year, and tried to tap into this growing – I don't think it's accurate to call

it liberal evangelical movement, but more maybe a new evangelicalism – that we really did see some changes in how evangelicals were voting. Nationally, I think Obama picked up about four percentage points among white evangelicals over where Kerry was in 2004. And you could attribute a lot of that to the fact that he picked up votes from a lot of people across the country. But if you really burrow down and you look at some key states where his campaign was quite active, and where you had groups like the Matthew 25 network, which is a new political action committee, they were running ads on Christian radio – which is a first for Democrats – running ads promoting Obama’s own faith, but also pushing back against the idea that a phrase like pro-life only describes where you stand on the issue of abortion, and in fact trying to insist that that can describe your position on a lot of different issues that could be pro-life. And in those states, whether it was Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, even North Carolina, you saw increases. In Indiana I think it was 11% swing from 2004 to 2008 among white evangelicals. And I think that that’s a big part of it.

The second thing, before we move on, would be the young evangelical vote, because that’s really – if you look at the evangelical community broadly, the real change is coming among evangelicals between the ages of about 18 and 35. There was a group, Faith in Public Life, that had a survey that came out before the election, just looking broadly at evangelical attitudes on political issues, but also social questions, things like, do you have any gay friends. And the real distinction is not even necessarily among people who call themselves moderate or conservative. It’s in that age category. And young evangelicals are much, much more open on a lot of these questions than their parents are. They’re much more likely to prefer diplomacy rather than military intervention as a means of achieving peace. They’re much more likely to support universal healthcare and increased spending, much more supportive of an activist government.

And that has political implications, because for the longest time, what I would hear when I talked to evangelicals was, you know, it’s so unfair, people say we don’t care about the poor. That’s not the case. We just disagree about whether it should be the state that provides for the least of these, or whether it’s private institutions, whether it’s faith-based organizations, churches, charities, what have you. Older evangelicals still kind of think it should be a matter up to private organizations. Younger evangelicals just don’t make that distinction. A lot of them are going on mission trips over their spring break, or over a winter semester, over the summer. They’re seeing the scope of problems, particularly in developing countries, with their own eyes, and they don’t see why you would separate out the government as a potential partner in solving some of those problems.

And that doesn’t mean that they’re going to be Democratic voters. Many of them are either leaving the Republican Party, or if they’re new voters, they’re

signing up for the first time as independents. They're not necessarily becoming Democrats. But that political shift, from seeing the state as not part of the solution to seeing the state as a potential partner in solving problems, that makes them open to voting for Democratic candidates. And in those cases where Democrats have actually actively gone after them and tried to form relationships, we've seen them respond positively. And so just the last number to throw out there is about 16% of 18 to 35-year-old white evangelicals voted for John Kerry, 32% of them voted for Barack Obama. And I actually think that number could have been a lot higher if the Obama campaign had actually gone after them. In just the last six weeks of the campaign, they had kind of a small speaking tour of surrogates on behalf of Obama. But if they had had a sustained effort for, say, the last six months of the campaign, I think we could have seen that number at 35, 40, even higher.

ROSIN: Bishop Jackson, can I ask you to jump in here and just talk about – you have friends in the evangelical movement. How has it changed? What happened last election to this election? What's the mindset? Do you feel like the movement is broadening, shifting, changing?

JACKSON: Well, I think the biggest thing that's happened, very – certainly what



Bishop Harry Jackson, Jr.

she's saying, but I'm going to take it from the approach that the conservative evangelical movement, by and large, has aligned itself, black or white, with moral issues that have found their home on the national platform in the Republican Party. And there's been a radical breakdown in the credibility of the Republican Party and its ability to deliver any promises. I sat in 2006 around the table with about 14 people with the President, in which he talked about his promise to protect marriage as a union

between a man and a woman. And he says to the group of people there, I can't do anything, I'm just a President. (laughter) And so everybody's wondering, well, why did we elect you if you can't do anything about it? And so there's been this idea that the religious right has been foot soldiers for a group of people who break their promises, don't follow through on details of engagement. And so what you're dealing with is, I think the Republican brand is down, and in the absence of a champion who embodies a set of core values, we have major problems.

So John McCain goes after the vote of a guy name Rod Parsley, endorsement, and John Hagee, and after he chases them down, gets them to endorse them, then stands up and say, oh, by the way, I don't agree with some of their policies, throws them under the bus, and then at the final hour of the campaign, expects with the selection of Sarah Palin he's going to get all those people back on board and enthusiastic to make him a winner in just a few weeks. So we have a breakdown.

And many people believe that Karl Rove was the brilliant architect of George Bush's victories. I'm not so sure that he's brilliant or an architect – I know he's not an architect – that was a joke, by the way, you're (laughter) free to laugh if you're so inclined. But the reality is, I believe that – when I say reality, my reality, both my intersect around the issue of race, and the premise of the *Personal Faith, Public Policy* book is that if conservative evangelical faith is going to have an impact on the culture, it needs to bridge Hispanic, white, and black evangelicals, bring them together around an agenda.

And so what happened in 2004 in Ohio with the marriage amendment, that also happened to put George W. Bush over the top, is that grassroots folks – without Karl Rove telling them, oh, by the way, you need to get together and protect marriage – on their own, they came together around a social agenda that meant something to them, but they didn't have the burden in this election of believing that even if we do elect you, so what? Are you really going to follow through on what you said? And that lack of enthusiasm by itself, I think, allowed black evangelicals to vote for Obama without reservation or concern. And I also believe that it kept a lot of white evangelicals from caring to get involved in the race very enthusiastically.

WALDMAN: So if you look at this as a chess game, the Republican Party,



Steven Waldman

because of the reasons that you spoke of, left themselves vulnerable to Democrats poaching religious voters. In the past, that would be an opportunity almost certainly not seized by Democrats, for reasons that Amy has written a whole book about. So what happened that made that change? And Barack Obama did improve, not only among evangelicals, but about four or five points among weekly churchgoers. He improved John Kerry's vote among weekly churchgoers.

So what happened? Part of it – go back to 2006, and look at the speech that Barack Obama gave to the Call to Renewal, which was a very detailed speech about his views of the role of religion in politics. And what is really interesting about the speech is that part of it was a rather severe critique of the Democratic Party and the Democratic electorate. I wanted to even read a quote, where he said –

ROSIN: Read it like – do it like Barack would do it. (laughter)

WALDMAN: I'm not even going to try. (laughter) But he chastised Democrats who dismiss religion in the public square as inherently irrational or intolerant, insisting on a caricature of religious Americans that paints them as

fanatical, or thinking that the very word Christian describes one's political opponents, not people of faith. The rest of the speech he also talked about, OK, well, what does it mean to be a Democrat who expresses his values in religious terms, how do you tap into that. He talked about civil rights movement, stuff like that.

ROSIN: And also what it means to be a Christian, right? That was that same speech –

WALDMAN: What it means to be a Christian.

ROSIN: – where he talked about doubts and faith and – yeah.

WALDMAN: Exactly. So he wasn't the only one, but it was retrospectively very important that he gave this speech, since he's the President now, because he really cast the Democratic Party on a different path in terms of its approach for religion.

And I agree, at the end of the day the economy was an overriding issue, so – even though I have like a professional need to overstate the importance of religion in every way, (laughter) and you –

ROSIN: We all do.

WALDMAN: We all do.

ROSIN: We'll collude on that, all four of us, yeah.

WALDMAN: I do think that it was quite an important development. And to me, the most remarkable moment in the campaign was when the Obama campaign in the primaries was distributing literature throughout a bunch of different states – this is in the primaries – with headlines like “Called to Christ, Called to Service, Barack Obama's Prayer Life.” And then in the general election, Matthew 25, the group that Amy mentioned, the radio ads that they were running in battleground states were audio clips of Barack Obama talking about kneeling before the Cross and accepting Christ into his life. OK, this is not normal Democratic Party behavior. (laughter) And I think that part of why Obama got away with it is two things. One is, everyone wanted him – you know, everyone on the left, on the secular left, everyone just bit their tongue. They sort of thought, OK, if this is what we got to do to get elected, we'll let him do this. We'll let him do the religious stuff if he has to. And I think secondly, something that Amy has written a lot about is that there's a little bit of a double standard for African-American politicians in the Democratic party, and that because he is black, he was able to get away with redefining religion in the Democratic Party in a way that not only helped blacks, but helped the Democratic Party in general.

ROSIN: Well, does anybody here think there's something wrong with this? I mean, that it's cynical, or that for Democrats to play this way, say like, oh, well they're playing them, so we'll play them in a different way, like – I mean, that's the way we're all talking about this. But does anyone have a problem with it?

SULLIVAN: That's the way we're talking about it because we're trying to analyze how it played out as a factor. I mean, we should also say that I think it's true that Barack Obama is one of the only Democrats who could have talked about faith in the way that he did. And he also has been very careful when he talks about it publicly to express his support for people who have secular values as well. That's his mother, and so he has a very personal connection to this. And he grew up as someone who did not belong to a church, became a Christian in his mid-20s. So he was formed up until adulthood with secular values and morals, and so comes from a position of being able to make that claim while also explaining his religious faith, which I think is ideal.

But he's also the only Democrat who has to do that. We all saw, or at least read about, the e-mails going around questioning whether he was a secret Muslim, whether he's not really a Christian, whether he's an Antichrist, the Antichrist, in fact. So to some extent he had to be out there, kind of forming an affirmative picture of his faith. And in fact, that was one of the lessons that someone like John Kerry came away from 2004 with, that if you are not out there as a Democrat describing to people and characterizing your own faith, it's not that people won't know who you are, they'll hear the Republican version of who you are. And so that was an important lesson I think the Democrats learned.

But you're right, Hanna, to ask whether this is a good thing. And I think right after 2004, that was a question that was up for grabs. E.J. Dionne likes to say that Democrats found God in the exit polls of 2004. (laughter) And to an extent, that's certainly what it sounded like. If you turned on C-SPAN in early 2005, you were likely to hear a version of what I like to think of as biblical Tourette's syndrome, which is (laughter) Congressmen kind of throwing biblical verses into their speeches on the House floor, almost at random, you know, pulling – telling their speechwriters – and I know this was happening – telling their speechwriters to find lyrics from hymns that might relate to the budget vote. (laughter) And – which led to the disaster of “Job is my favorite book of the New Testament,” right? So if you play that way, it's something you have to do delicately. And I think that just struck everybody as artificial, and trying a little too hard.

And what I think Democrats realized, particularly using 2006 as kind of a test for this model, is it's not a matter of how much you talk about Jesus, and

the amount of Godspeak that you have. It's a matter of forming relationships with constituencies who haven't heard from the Democratic party in maybe decades. And that's not a matter of pandering to them. Just because Republicans have done it one way, doesn't mean that the Democratic version of it is just the parallel. And so you saw in 2006 states like Michigan and Ohio and Pennsylvania in particular, the state parties really go in and spend – in Michigan they spent a whole year, the state party chairman of the Democratic party met with about 500 religious leaders around the state. And it's my home state, and I can tell you, from the Western half, it's almost dominated by white evangelicals, who are pretty conservative politically, and who haven't heard from Democrats in years. And to have somebody call them up and not try to get their vote, just say, we're here and we want to hear what you care about, what your concerns are, they saw it as a long-term effort. And so it may even not be appropriate for us to be judging two years later whether it worked for all time or not. This is a matter of getting back that trust that they had lost from primarily white Catholic communities and white evangelicals, but across the religious spectrum.

And it is starting to change. Steve probably has the numbers in his magic papers over there. But Democrats have started to move back in terms of people seeing them as friendly towards religion. In fact, I think Barack Obama was rated more friendly towards religion than John McCain by voters across the board this fall. That is something that's new for the Democratic Party. And whether or not it has consequences on Election Day, what it does mean is they now have political partners to work with on different issues. And that's a change from what we've seen in the last few decades.

ROSIN: Bishop Jackson, how does this hit you? Because I feel like you are in an incredibly interesting position at this moment. You have friends among the religious right, and you're faced with a position where I feel like Americans just do not understand the Black church. That's going to become obvious after the Proposition 8 vote and the way that hit people, and Reverend Wright and his anti-Americanism, people just don't get how the African-American church works. And so I just – what do you see as your role, in either educating people, or in – who's going to be your new alliances, how does it work for someone like you who's been in this for a long time?

JACKSON: Well, it's an interesting thing. My take on all of this is, I'm an evangelical, I'm conservative, have agreed with a lot of what has been said by the religious right, but always felt that their blind spot was the issue of biblically-based justice, and they seemed –

ROSIN: Meaning what, like –

JACKSON: Well, like what happens to the poor, the administration of justice in general through the penal system and criminal justice system in terms of black and white, racial profiling, higher sentences for blacks, dealing with issues – ground-level issues, education, all of



Hanna Rosin, Steven Waldman, Amy Sullivan, Bishop Harry Jackson, Jr.

those things are – should be an outworking of our faith. And it seems as though there’s been this myopia that says, if you only are for marriage in traditional sense, which I’m certainly for, and you’re trying to stop abortion, if that litmus test isn’t fulfilled, you’re not a valid Christian. So I’ve been talking a lot the last four, five years to major evangelical leaders about the fact that if you want the Black community to come alongside of you on these important issues of life and family as you see them, you’re going to have to at least throw them a bone with some interest in – credible interest in some other social issues.

And it seems as though some of the older evangelicals don’t get it, haven’t gotten it, may not get it. There are a lot of hurt feelings, so I’ve been working with that over the last four years. Play – a program I was on this past week with T.D. Jakes, who probably everybody here knows, and we’re talking about the fact that he felt there’s a lot of hurt feelings among African-American leaders of the Black megachurches, and many who at a grassroots level supported Barack Obama, that Obama was called Antichrist, la-la-la-la. And it’s opened right now a potential divide, again, that I’ve been trying to work at getting closed between Blacks, whites, and Hispanic Christians. Can we move together, can we work together? And where I sit, this presidency could either be the most divisive, in terms of race, if the church doesn’t engage and revolve around that, or it could be the most unifying. And I think time will tell.

My hope, though, is that there needs to be summits among – I’m just talking now about the evangelical right for a minute – in the evangelical right, and behind closed doors summits that deal with folks saying, you have no practical way that you’re going to get abortion overturned in the next eight to 10 years. It’s not going to happen. Same-sex marriage is something you can prevent from marriage being redefined in the next few years, but you can’t shift the way the culture’s going. Younger people think differently than you do. So are you going to get relevant to the overall needs of the

community, or you going to become an irrelevant voice in terms of social action. Those are things that conservative –

ROSIN: And the “you” in this case are evangelicals, that you’re –

JACKSON: Yeah, you – I’m talking about –

ROSIN: Why don’t you just move over to the Democratic Party? Like what stops you from doing that, sort of new face of the Democratic Party?

JACKSON: Well, you know, ironically, all along I have been –I am a registered Democrat. On a national level, though, I have sided with, worked with, and fought with in the trenches, Republicans. I worked on the ground level in Florida and in California, and it was by a lot of effort and lots of man hours on the ground. That vote didn’t just happen, that people decided that they were for Proposition 8 in California. Trust me, I had to be on the phone with some guys, bishops, leaders of organizations and say things like this: “I am not a Republican, and you can vote for Obama if you want to, but you are going to be held accountable if you let marriage go down the tubes. This is your responsibility. If you believe that’s a real issue, Mr. Bishop of this great organization, then you’re going to have to stand up and let your conscience guide what you do.” That involved out-of-the-box thinking, and a different kind of soul-searching than the way that we have been trained to deal with Republican and Democratic issues recently. Forgive the rant. I am passionate about it.

ROSIN: No, it’s OK. I mean, it’s good to have you speak it, because for many Democrats that was kind of the thorn in the rose. I think a lot of Democrats somehow don’t really believe that Obama’s really – like they sort of think, like, oh, well, he just says that because – you know? Anyway, go ahead.

WALDMAN: Well, everyone’s in for a surprise. There were a lot of Democrats who convinced themselves that Obama was a lot of different things. I happened to be at a conference of very, very left-wing spiritual leaders a couple weeks ago, and heard the conversation that said, I’m concerned that Obama said that he was going to pull troops out of Iraq and then put them in Afghanistan. And another person said, oh, he didn’t mean that, he was just saying that to get elected. The third person – and the other person said, no, I think he might actually mean that. (laughter)

Now, to go back to your question before about, is this cynical or is this actually grounded in some real faith? Of course, it’s both. And it’s probably both within any given individual, but more importantly, it’s both within the Democratic Party. So you have people within the Democratic Party who view this entirely cynically. They’re the people who are throwing random Bible verses in to make it sound better. But then you have religious

Democrats who were emboldened and were speaking out, and worked hard this campaign, and in fact because, as Amy said, the Obama campaign didn't actually in the fall campaign do as much, the burden was picked up by these independent religious progressives.

And they actually expect to get something out of this. In other words, they didn't do this for the fun of it. They want Obama – like anyone who works to help get someone elected, they have an agenda that they want to follow. And here's the really interesting thing that's going to play out over the next year. When you look at the issues they pushed in these battleground states in these ads, it was not fighting poverty, for the most part. It was not getting out of Iraq, for the most part. It was abortion. And it was that the progressive religious Democrats did something that I think tactically was very smart, which was they tried to insulate Democrats – give permission to pro-life evangelicals, pro-life Catholics, to vote for Obama on the economy by making this abortion reduction case. You know, you can be pro-life, you can be concerned about abortion and still vote Democratic, because Obama and Biden had this new idea that you can be pro-choice, you can support *Roe v. Wade*, and still reduce the number of abortions by reducing unintended pregnancies and various other things. And it's hard to know exactly what impact that had, but the progressive religious people who pushed hard, and pushed hard this argument, are now expecting President Obama to actually do something about this. And if he completely blows that off, and the first thing he does is sign the Freedom of Choice Act, which is what he promised Planned Parenthood, they're going to feel very exposed, very betrayed, and will turn against Obama.

SULLIVAN: Well, we already had a moment like that after the Sarah Palin selection was announced, because this was the line that the Obama campaign had been using, not necessarily publicly -- although he had a line in his acceptance speech in Denver about it and did also talk about it in the third Presidential debate. But immediately, the first thing the Obama campaign did after Sarah Palin was picked was run ads in battleground states that were traditionally the Democratic kind of hardcore, protect *Roe* at all costs, and don't mention the goal of preventing unwanted pregnancies, that it could have been run by any of the choice groups. And I heard from a number of these progressive religious leaders who felt thrown under the bus. Guys like Douglas Kmiec, who was a Justice Department official in the Reagan and first Bush administrations. He had come out as a very public supporter for Obama, and had done a lot of events, kind of putting his neck out there, speaking to other Catholics and saying, here's how I reasoned through it as a Catholic. He's been involved in the pro-life movement his whole adult life, and he actually got denied Communion earlier this spring because of his support for Obama. So this is somebody who had really put himself out there, and then the first chance that the Obama campaign has of feeling

worried that maybe they were going to lose women voters because Sarah Palin was on the ticket their instinct was to go back to the line.

And so the question for a lot of progressive religious folks now is, are we seeing a change in the Democratic Party, or is the instinct still there? And that's going to be the first response.

ROSIN: I hate to let slide an opportunity to talk about Sarah Palin, but I'm going to, because it's not relevant at this moment. The – can you flesh out what he's actually said about abortion? Because I feel like, hearing you talk, I don't know that.

SULLIVAN: Obama himself?

ROSIN: Obama. What exactly has he said and not said about abortion? Because you've written really well about the idea that safe, legal, and rare, that's not good enough. That was good enough for 1995, but it's not good enough for now. So what – where – how forward thinking is he on this issue, himself?

SULLIVAN: Himself – well, to be very honest, it is hard to tell. And I'm not trying to be flip here. And it's because the economy and all these other issues really did come to the fore, that if you listened to the debates, what we got used to in 2000 and 2004 were a lot of questions about the candidate's personal faith, about abortion. You know, John Kerry gave a memorably totally convoluted answer in 2004, trying to cover his bases from all angles, and ending up, I think, alienating everybody with what he said about abortion.

Obama had a different approach, which was to do, I think, three different things. One, to say, I'm pro-choice. Just – you know, so there's no confusion out there, because a lot of Democrats get themselves in trouble by trying to pretend that maybe they're not, and everybody knows that they are, so it just makes them look insincere. So he says, I'm pro-choice, but – and pivots very quickly to, whether you're pro-life or you're pro-choice, most of us can agree that it would be a good thing if we could reduce the overall rate of abortions in this country. And there are ways to do that, and it's perhaps a more effective way than just waiting for the court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. We can provide economic supports for women who want to have their babies and carry them to full term. We can reform our adoption laws. We can make contraception more available.

What happened with teen pregnancy over the last 15 years is a good model here. The pregnancy rate and the abortion rate among teenagers went down by over a third, over 33%. And it did so because both sides worked. It was both a pro-choice and a pro-life strategy. Kids were having less sex, and when they had sex, it was much more likely to be protected. It's not rocket

science. But it worked, and it makes it much harder for either side to say that their pure approach, either totally abstinence or, you know, forget about sex ed, just focus on contraception, is the way to go. And he has indicated that that, at least, is the policy direction. You mentioned safe, legal, and rare. That worked in 1992, because it was the first time a lot of people had heard a Democrat saying that abortion should be rare. That was kind of a new idea for a lot of folks. By 1996, there was no policy muscle behind that. It was just a slogan. And so when something like the partial-birth ban came up, I think Clinton left himself very exposed on the abortion issue, because he had not built up an affirmative policy effort to go after the abortion rate. If Obama is going to be able to do something like sign the Freedom of Choice Act, he is going to have to have some policy muscle behind that. And that's why he actually didn't have a slogan to go along with this year. What he had was the meat.

WALDMAN: You know, I did a exhaustive, or exhausting, piece (laughter) for the journal about the behind-the-scenes battles over these two sentences in the abortion plank of the Democratic platform.

ROSIN: How interesting. What were the sentences?

WALDMAN: Well, it was – first of all, they deleted safe, legal, and rare, for the reasons that Amy said. But everyone was like, hey, what happened to rare, you know, is – people thought they were backtracking. But the interesting thing about the debate was that they – in the first sentence, they increased, they amped up the pro-choice language. It was like, to give double, triple reassurance to the pro-choice people.

WALDMAN: Then they had language that said, we're going to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. The pro-choice groups would not let them say we want to reduce the number of abortions. That phrase did not actually appear in the platform. It says reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. And there was a fight over that. But what the kind of progressive religious people got was an additional sentence – and this is what was new – that said, we also want to make it easier for women to choose to carry the baby to term. Some people have referred to it as the Juno option, after the (laughter) after the movie. But the idea is like, OK, we want to work to reduce unintended pregnancies, but if they do get pregnant, we want to make it easier for them to either economically raise the child, or put the child up for adoption.

It was probably only three people knew the significance of any of these things, and the real question was going to be, what were the candidates going to do once they got out on the trail. It was somewhat superseded by the economy, but not entirely, and the Obama people said to the pro-choice people during the platform debate, OK, OK, we won't say reduce the number

of abortions. But in the campaign, they did. Joe Biden said, we are going to reduce the number of abortions. So much for the carefully negotiated thing.

The second thing – and this is a political point – is that any of you who watched the debates on CNN and became addicted to the little dial meters – I actually – I'd stopped watching the candidates, I was just watching the lines –

ROSIN: Watching the dial meters. (laughter)

WALDMAN: And they had this – in the third debate, they had independent voters. And John McCain did the kind of traditional appeal to the base position on abortion. Obama did one sentence, as Amy said, reaffirming the pro-choice thing. And then he pivoted and said, but surely we can find some common ground, to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. And the dial meters went up – like they couldn't go any higher. It just flat lined at the top of the –

ROSIN: Just the women ones, or the men ones? Because they divided them, and –

WALDMAN: I think at that point it was independents. And they know the politics of this. Don't know what deep down is in his heart, but they know the politics of it.

ROSIN: That seems like that would be deep down – I mean, it seems like that would be the place he landed.

I want to come back around to something we talked about before. I have a good friend who ran the Democratic platform groups, and one comment that she had was that she was surprised at how actually little power the traditional feminist groups had, and how much power and how well organized the gay groups were. And she said, it's like they have switched places in terms of Democratic activist groups – organization, focus, money, all kinds of things that we – that used to belong to the women's groups on the left. And so I really feel like Prop 8 is where the rubber hits the road, and where all this – and so I wonder – like, do you feel like it's a lonely position?

JACKSON: Well, it's going to be a lonely place – I was on Larry King Friday before last. Guy that's there with me says, no more Mr. Nice Gay. I said, you been nice before? (laughter) I mean, I've had death threats personally, I've been attacked verbally. And so that was nice? So what I believe is going to happen is that this raging attack against evangelicals is – the further right you are, the more likely you're going to get attacked – is going to come out more. I was one of six churches, Rick Warren's church, Bill Hybels, Eddie Long, T.D. Jakes, Joel Osteen, and our church were singled out for family outing, which – Soulforce came to our churches and wanted to have dialogues, and all this kind of thing.

So what we're dealing with now is that the gay movement, I think, is going to be much more vocal, much more angry, attacking Mormon churches, doing – putting swastikas on churches – but a dynamic that may mess them all up is this. There is a fissure of racism that is manifesting. Jasmine Cannick, who writes for *Los Angeles Times*, said with all the problems we got in the black community – she's openly gay, lesbian woman – says, with all the problems we got in the black community, I was not out there getting people to register to vote so they could vote against Proposition 8. I was trying to get Obama into the White House, because of all the issues that are there.

And many blacks have been called the N word at some of these rallies. The – what we should call this lady – the liberal intellectual Roseanne Barr – I'm just joking – said, "I can't believe how ignorant black people are, and their hateful preachers are encouraging them to do all this stuff." So I think the gay movement has prostituted – these are my words – and hijacked the impact of the civil rights movement, and now wants to throw the people themselves under the bus, saying, you're so ignorant, you can't see the issue. If anybody understands civil rights, in America, or the lack thereof, the Black community does. And they're just saying, if you're a privileged group as makes more money than average people, you're more educated than average folks, I don't see how you claim the same exclusion or rejection by the culture unless you come out, you let people know what you believe. There's a whole lot of issues there.

So I think, if they're going to continue this aggressive kind of attack, it's going to be a widening fissure. I think Blacks are predisposed to be tolerant and accommodating to people, other people, but when you say, you're homophobic if you don't agree with me, something else rises up in the minds and the hearts of Blacks that have a backbone, and say, no, you're not going to intimidate me. You are not going to make me bow down to the altar of your religious convenience.

ROSIN: Anybody?

SULLIVAN: Well – (laughter)

ROSIN: Want to take that on?

JACKSON: Tell me what I really think?

SULLIVAN: I would just point out –

ROSIN: Wrap it up, OK? This is the last one, and then we'll open it up.

SULLIVAN: There's another conversation going on after Prop 8. I mean, obviously there's been a lot of anger, a lot of fear and hurt feelings, I think, in the gay community. And you've seen that through – was it just last weekend that all the marches and rallies took place around the country. And yes, some of them were marches to Mormon temples, which I think has been a disturbing development. It's very easy, just as it is easy, I think, to launch blame at African-American churches, it's been easy to launch blame at the Mormons. And there was one particular commercial that came out for – in favor of Prop 8 before the election that had two Mormon missionaries who were very creepy raiding the house of a lesbian couple, finding their marriage certificate, ripping it up, and then saying, whose rights are we going to take away next? I don't think that's necessarily something that would happen if it was, say, the Catholic church that had been the prime mover in favor of funding the Prop 8 initiative.

But what is happening – and I've been following it through people like Andrew Sullivan's blogs – is an ongoing conversation from another group in the gay and lesbian community saying, one of the things we're learning from this vote is, we have not had the kind of dialogue that maybe we should with a lot of religious communities. Maybe in some cases it would have changed people's minds. Or maybe it doesn't, but it cannot hurt us to have a positive dialogue. So I don't know how you break that down in terms of the power base that you're seeing much more organized, or just in general among the grassroots. But the fact that that is evolving I think may actually end up having more of an impact going forward.

ROSIN: OK, thank you guys so much. We are opening up the floor for questions, if people would line up at the microphones the way they did before. Respect the 45-second rule. Please, go ahead.

MALEY: Yeah, thanks. Leo Maley. On the religion thing, of course, the fight for marriage equality is largely religiously motivated. Here in Massachusetts, we had over 1000 clergy join with the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry to publicly lobby for full civil marriage rights, and that was a critical factor in winning over three-quarters of the state legislature's vote. But I'm actually interested in some of the political boundary-crossing that the Bishop is involved in. And I was reading your book that came out earlier this year. On page 208, when you talk about –

ROSIN: Woohoo! (laughter)

JACKSON: Thank you for reading it. (laughter)

MALEY: When you talk about how African-Americans are in “bondage” to the Democratic Party – that's the quote – I have a general and a specific question. The general one is, as an African-American intellectual, is bondage really the

metaphor you want to use in terms of African-Americans' relationship to the Democratic Party? And then specifically, how does that relate to what happened just a few weeks ago? Was that the kind of an act that reinforced bondage, or was that an act that did something else?

JACKSON: Well, I would say bondage just means that you just follow blindly. On the one side, white evangelicals have been in bondage to the Republican Party. They say jump, and the white evangelical community – I know it's a generalization – basically said, how high, until recently. That's being rethought. And my position would be, I'd love it if we had an agenda that is basically not political, that has a set of goals, and that we say to both the Democrats and the Republicans, these are the kinds of things that we're for, and these are the kinds of things that we're against. So maybe it's a bad metaphor, but I have seen it. I'd like to think about another metaphor would be, African-Americans have been in an adulterous relationship with the Democratic Party. They show up at midnight, they want what they want when they want it and how they want it, but after they get what they want, they don't give us flowers, they don't take us out to dinner, (laughter) there's no romance.

MALEY: I'm glad you found a much less inflammatory metaphor. (laughter)

JACKSON: That's a bad habit of preaching for so many years. You go for response. (laughter)

SULLIVAN: I can just throw in one comment on that. One of the things that I think the Reverend Wright issue brought to the fore is the extent to which Democrats are used to going into Black churches, particularly on the weekend before an election, and showing up to get votes, but not actually listening to what's going on in the churches. And that's one reason that Democrats as well as Republicans were surprised when the tapes of some of Reverend Wright's sermons came out, and they heard the language that was being used. Often, the way African-American pastors are described is kind of separate from the content of their sermons. People talk about the melodic preaching, or the rhythmic preaching. You know, the folks show up from the Democratic party who tell me – ordinarily they believe we need a strict separation of church and state, religion and politics have nothing to do with each other – but they have no problem showing up at a place where they see it as like convenient gathering of a lot of African-American voters in one place. It's not religion necessarily.

And so one of the things we're rediscovering is, there is a strain in a lot of African-American preaching that is railing against injustice. It's angry. It's maybe not necessarily always the way we saw it from Jeremiah Wright, but I think folks need to listen a little more to the words of the sermons instead of the music, and then they wouldn't be so surprised when the community votes

in large numbers for something like Proposition 8, or when Jeremiah Wright's sermons get out there.

WALDMAN: One related point, which is that we've been talking about this sort of interesting schism on the Democratic side. There's also an interesting schism that's become apparent on the Republican side, which is, in the aftermath of the election, when the knives came out on the Republican side and everyone was starting to blame each other for who was really at fault, one of the things that came out is that certain kind of economic conservatives started to blame the social conservatives for blowing the election for them. And I actually think there is an argument that social conservatives – that leaning too hard in that direction hurt the Republican Party. But it has blown my mind how insulting some of the economic conservatives have been toward these people who were very, very close allies a week ago. Like there was a piece in the *Washington Post* op ed from Kathleen Parker who referred to social conservatives as the “oogedy-boogedy” wing of the party, and said, these people are people who we used to relegate to standing on crazy soapboxes in the corner of the town square, and we've been listening to them too much, and therefore we've blown it.

And I think for a lot of religious conservatives, this wasn't necessarily a surprise, but it's opened some wounds, because they have felt used. They've felt like these people probably did hold them in contempt all these years, and – or at least wondered about it, and now they're thinking, oh, they did.

ROSIN: That happened around Sarah Palin too, where the sort of intellectual wing of the Republican party was like, oh, we didn't really – we didn't mean it, no, this is too much for us, where before, like they had been busily planning all these kind of alliances, but she was too much.

Q: I'm an Episcopal priest, and I'm a gay rights activist and a pro-choice activist, and Leo made one of the points I was going to make about the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry, which was really – all was there in the marriage equality movement in Massachusetts, but had to fight all the time to be included in the Coalition. And I can understand in a way that many gay and lesbian people have been hurt by organized religion, and don't understand that religious people can be their allies. But it's still sort of problematic when you're right there, to be rejected or ignored. But it's – and it's less understandable, I think, for the pro-choice movement. Progressive pro-choice clergy have been around for a long time, but it's often not perceived that we're allies, even when we're in the room.

So I think my question is a kind of deep question about why progressive movements have not seen progressive clergy as friendly. Is it that progressive clergy don't have our acts together somehow, or is there something

intrinsically inimical between secular progressive movements and progressive religious people?

SULLIVAN: One of the things I found while researching this history for my book, because I wanted to explain how we got to the point where people assumed, if you were religious, you must be conservative, and if you were a Democrat, well, you must be opposed to religion anywhere in the public square, is that that's really been reinforced, that split, through the last few decades of a hardening conventional wisdom, that a theological identity is also a political identity. It wasn't always the case, on the left in particular, but as people kind of, again, got this assumption that if you were a religious leader, well, you must be a Republican, you must be intolerant. I mean, I've found this myself when I started working in Democratic politics. When people found out I was a Christian, not even mind evangelical, they assumed certain things about my policy positions. They probably assumed I was a little less intelligent than they had thought I was previously. And that makes it hard to form alliances. One place we continue to see this come up – and this will be something to watch over the next few years – is for these progressive groups, some of which Steve mentioned, and I did – you know, a group like Matthew 25 is a brand new political action committee struggling, as most these groups are, for funding, because on the left, there's a lot of interest in funding groups that will tear down the religious right and go after them. But if your idea of providing a counterweight to the religious right is building up the religious left, they're not interested in giving you money.

And so there is a real concern that – you know, we saw the coming out of a lot of these groups this year, but that may be as high as they can climb, because until they have more resources – and some of that will involve support from their more secular peers – there's really a limit to how much they can grow.

ROSIN: Yeah?

Q: My questions are pretty quick and simple. Where will President Obama go to church in Washington, and what does it matter? (laughter) And behind that is simply a question about what sort of religious community can a president have. And there'll be the political discussion of what it matters, and then I'm curious about what does it really matter.

ROSIN: Well, Amy wrote the story about this.

SULLIVAN: Well, just briefly, I don't know where he's going to go to church, but I did last week call up half a dozen different people who know the Washington religious world very well, and I will yield to the Bishop, who knows more than, I think the rest of us. But I got some interesting suggestions. As you know, a lot of presidents have found it easiest just to go

across Lafayette Square to St. John's Episcopal Church. I don't think Obama will do that, for a number of reasons, among them the fact that it's currently being renovated, so they're holding services in the Chamber of Commerce headquarters. (laughter)

WALDMAN: Wow, spiritual place.

SULLIVAN: Just isn't kind of what you're looking for. (laughter) But I will say, the most interesting suggestion I got – and there are also a couple of predominantly African-American UCC congregations, so it's going to be hard to replicate the preaching of Reverend Wright – although I think replicating Reverend Wright is something they're going to avoid at all costs. But the most intriguing suggestion I got was that they should go worship at the military chapel on Fort Meyer Army base, the idea being that one of the factors that always comes up with the First Family is the security of the church. But also that it would be a mixed race congregation. You've got lots of kids on army bases, so there would be lots of activities for Sasha and Malia. And they hold a number of different tradition services in the chapel. So, I don't know, that's the one I would be interested to see them. Plus, they'd be worshipping with the troops. And every church in DC is trying to get them to come to their church, and that would be a very easy way to avoid playing favorites (inaudible) we'd love to come, we're worshipping with the troops.

WALDMAN: Interesting. That's a much easier question than the –

ROSIN: Where will they go to school, to private school.

WALDMAN: No, I was going to say which kind of puppy are they going –

ROSIN: Oh, the puppy, yeah.

WALDMAN: That's going to absolutely create fissures in American society –

ROSIN: In the puppy communities, right.

JACKSON: I would add this, that he could signal something about where he wants to land on this theological spectrum by his choice of churches. But as a person who has to show up at church every single week, if he's going to be a regular attender of one congregation, my prayer for them is that they'll actually be part of a community of faith that nourishes them spiritually, and that they genuinely feel comfortable in. Because no matter what congregation they choose, somebody's going to be sitting there with a notepad analyzing why it's right or wrong. At least my prayer would be that they'd be happy and receive ministry in the setting they're in.

Q: How would the various sides feel about Proposition 8 if marriage were no longer a government issue? So if you wanted to get married, it would be between you and the church where you wanted to get married, and all that the State of California would do is grant a civil union; it couldn't and wouldn't grant marriages any more, it wouldn't give special tax status because of being married, it would only be about civil unions.

JACKSON: I'm not so sure I caught the question. Can I get a rephrase, perhaps?

ROSIN: You mean if marriage weren't a legal right?

Q: Exactly, yeah. It's just something the state is not interested in any more. It's only something churches can grant. The state only is interested in civil unions.

ROSIN: That's interesting. And you'd create a whole different rules based – you know –

Q: Yeah, I thought this was a common question, and I just hadn't been up on *Time* and *Newsweek* or something. I didn't think this would stump anyone.

ROSIN: It's radical – it's only common at a university. (laughter)

Q: I'll take it over there.

ROSIN: (laughter) Right, exactly. Anyone have thoughts? I don't know.

WALDMAN: I have heard that, and I don't know why it hasn't come up more as an issue, but I think that what it does highlight – and this refers also to the question before – is that the marriage issue has been cast in the last – this last election year as a matter of kind of secular rights against religious rights. And as the woman from Massachusetts was saying, that it's actually also a battle within religion. It's also a battle between two different interpretations of what Scripture actually teaches. And I think that we're going to start to see more of that. I think we're going to start to see more of the progressive churches realizing – like I don't know. You talked about how influential they were in Massachusetts. I don't know enough about California. Were they as influential in California? So that's going to be a wake-up call to the progressive churches in California about what the big difference was between California and Massachusetts.

JACKSON: Often in debates about gay marriage, I find that ministers who say that they believe that this should be the order of the day don't quote the Bible, don't go into any biblical premises. I did a program on a PBS network and after the program, the moderator came up to me and said, why didn't they use the Bible for their point of view? I don't get it. And because the

other minister talked about law, talked about how the Supreme Court of California worked, talked about taking back rights, talked about Constitution, talked about everything but the basis of faith. And this person that was hosting is not a religious person. They're open to religion, but they're not right-wing evangelical or on the left. They just said, if I wanted to get a legal discourse, I would have called the best lawyers in the region in. And so I bring in ministers, and I get one person that says the Bible doesn't teach us, and another person runs around Robin Hood's barn and doesn't discuss it from a biblical perspective. So I think that's really something to share –

WALDMAN: I just want to respond to one thing you said, because on Beliefnet we did this really interesting survey of our readers after the election, and as I looked at it, I realized that among religious voters on both sides, which were large numbers, the number one difference between them, statistically, was how they interpreted the Bible differently. In other words, McCain religious voters said Bible was the literal word of God. Obama religious voters said God was the divine inspiration for the Bible. And if you're in that second camp, and if you're saying that the Bible gives certain key meta-messages about taking care of the least of these, or about equality, you will quote the Bible less literally. You will treat the Bible differently, even in a public discourse, than you will if you view Scripture literally. So I start to think that part of why you have this different approach to the use of biblical language is literally these 2000-year-old divides within Christianity over what the Bible even means.

ROSIN: Or how you use it, maybe.

WALDMAN: And that's profound. So you'd say in that setting, perhaps the other minister didn't use that lens to project their argument, because it didn't hold the same kind of weight it would for people – my kind of a mindset, which is probably true.

ROSIN: I'm on this side, right?

Q: Bishop Jackson, you spoke earlier about the lack of the conservative movement's interest in meeting some of these minority concerns, some of these biblical justice concerns. And so I'm curious about this idea in the conservative movement of compassionate conservatism, and its most recent incarnation in the Sam's Club movements. And I'm just curious, and I'd like to hear from the panel, whoever would be interested in responding, if this is a plausible path for the Republican party, with its soul-searching that it's going through right now, and if it's been too tainted by the Bush administration and his embracing of it; whether or not this could be a plausible path for the Republican party and for the conservative movement as it goes forward.

JACKSON: You saying compassionate conservatism?

Q: Yes.

JACKSON: Let me give a real short answer to that. I think it could be. I'm concerned about the – I'm losing my voice almost literally. I'm concerned about the idea that Republicans think they have been too religious, and maybe they haven't really been practical enough with the follow-through, like the compassionate conservatism. I think many of the more progressive evangelicals would have loved to see Republicans actually carry out what Bush said in theory in practice, and – but I'm very concerned that you're going to see the Republican party back away much more from the verbal steps they've taken. And maybe in the long haul, Barack Obama has the potential of being actually much more compassionate Christian in terms of the actual work that is done than Bush actually carried out.

ROSIN: This is our last – oh, go ahead.

SULLIVAN: I just wanted to say that that debate about compassionate conservatism may be moving out of the Republican Party to a more kind of independent realm. Steve made the point about the debates between fiscal conservatives and social conservatives. That really made the difference. If you look around the country – I've spent some time traveling to a lot of the battleground states, and in every single one of them, what I saw were fiscal conservatives who had been voting Democratic or moving away from the Republican Party over the last decade specifically because of Sarah Palin type Republicans. So adding her to the ticket certainly didn't help bring them back into the fold. John McCain on his own might have been the kind of Republican they would vote for, but she kind of pushed them away.

But I would say compassionate conservatism maybe defines – maybe that's the label they should use, this new evangelicalism. I mean, these are the folks who have been disillusioned by not seeing it carried through in the Bush administration, and that really describes them probably better than anything. It's why Mike Huckabee this time was probably the compassionate conservative 2.0. He got a lot of support from the grassroots, almost none from the leadership of the religious right. And I think that's one reason this debate might be unmoored from them and from the Republican Party.

ROSIN: Last question.

Q: As I recall, the Pew research on religion in America had a statistic that said that something on order of magnitude of 18-19% of the people they polled were either agnostics or atheists. And in light of all of the discussion around the religious right, and possibly some pandering on the part of liberal

Democrats around religion, do you see a possibility of some kind of a backlash, with that number of people in the country that don't ascribe to any of these religious beliefs?

WALDMAN: In these *God Gap* surveys that talk about religious attendance, one of the categories is, never attend church. In 2004, John Kerry won that group with 62%. In 2008, Barack Obama won that group with 68%. So part of what happened – we've talked about how he did better among religious voters. He also did better among secular voters. It's a little hard to know why. Some of it just may be the economy and have nothing to do with this. But anecdotally, we feel that the more the Republican Party has become perceived as a party in which you're kind of not welcome if you're not religious, the more that would lead people who might be, say, fiscally conservative, that voted Republican their whole lives, or foreign policy conservatives, but feel uncomfortable in the Republican Party because of religion would have looked at the Democratic party anew this time. So I think that's a real issue that the Republicans are going to have to grapple with.

SULLIVAN: And again, this is happening at the same time that Democrats are engaged in probably more religious outreach, and more public religious outreach, than they ever have been before. So we often hear the question of, is this going to push secular voters out of the party? So far it seems not to, and if I had to guess why, I would say, going back to one of the points I made earlier, Democrats are learning it's not a choice between doing nothing or doing it like the Bush-Cheney campaign did. There are many different possibilities in between. When you hear Barack Obama talk about faith, when you listen to what Democrats are doing these days, it's not necessarily just copying Republican efforts. Some people are still made uncomfortable by it, but not enough to be pushed away from the party right now.

ROSIN: Thank you, panelists, and thank you for all your great questions.

(applause)

END OF SESSION 2

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