

Study: Christians Leaving the Republican Party

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The report found that social concerns, such as abortion and the protection of marriage, are not the only issues that are factoring into evangelical voter decisions.

“We have a greater proportion of faith-driven voters who are concerned about issues that are often thought of as 'liberal' social policy concerns, such as poverty and health care,” said Barna Group founder George Barna.

If the presidential elections were held today, the study found 40 percent of born-again believers would vote for a Democratic candidate and 29 percent would choose a Republican. The survey indicated 28 percent remain undecided.

In choosing specific candidates, the study found that Hillary Clinton garnered the highest percentage of the vote with 20 percent, Barack Obama came in with 18 percent and Mike Huckabee captured 12 percent—the highest percentage of all the Republican candidates. None of the other candidates reached the double-digit percentile.

These numbers sharply contrast the 62 percent of the evangelical voters who sided with President George W. Bush just four years ago.

“In recent elections, the faith vote sided with the Republican

candidate early in the race, allowing those candidates to focus on winning over swing votes,” Barna said. “In this year’s contest, however, the faith vote cannot be taken for granted.”

A recent article by *The New York Times* found that evangelical Democrats have not been tracked by exit polls.

This disparity is seen in the Democratic exit poll questionnaires, which largely do not ask the religious affiliation of Democratic voters.

Yet the vast majority of Republican exit poll questionnaires not only ask the religious affiliation of the voters but also the amount of times he or she attends a church service and whether or not he or she considers themselves a born-again or evangelical Christian.

“Much can change between now and November, but Republican candidates have a tough road ahead of them this year,” Barna concluded.