

# Apples or Bananas? New Barna Poll Discredits 'Evangelicals Voted For Trump' Narrative

Ever since the exit polls were released following President-elect Donald Trump's victory last month, many faith leaders have said evangelicals went to the polls in record numbers to ensure his win.

Now, the results of a poll conducted by the Barna Group is throwing a bucket of cold water on that narrative.

The poll's findings indicate that it wasn't evangelical voters who pushed Trump to victory. Rather "notional Christians"—people who consider themselves to be Christian but they have not made "a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today" or believe that when they die they will go to heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior—are given much of the credit.

The poll also found:

- Evangelical turnout was strong, but not at record levels.
- Evangelical support for Trump was the lowest for a Republican candidate since former Sen. Bob Dole lost to President Bill Clinton in 1996.
- The election turned to Trump's favor in the final two months.
- Pro-life advocates supported Trump by a 2-to-1 margin.
- Tea party conservatives supported Trump by a 7-to-1 margin.
- Christians, in general, made the difference for Trump.

The report stated:

According to researcher George Barna, who is serving as a special analyst for the company's 2016 election polling, the voting results show an unusual faith-related division. "Voters who considered themselves to be Christian were more likely to vote for Trump than Clinton. Those who were not associated with the Christian faith were overwhelmingly behind Clinton. Each of the three Christian segments—evangelicals, non-evangelical born-again, and notional Christians—went with Trump. Both of the non-Christian segments—those associated with other faiths as well as the skeptics—were in Clinton's camp. Just as the candidates displayed vastly different political orientations, the voters who lined up behind each of them reflected many of those same differences."

The role of faith in this election was inescapable, the founder and former owner of the research company explains. "Think about all of the significant faith-driven events in the campaign. Eight evangelicals ran for the GOP nomination. There were high-profile meetings featuring the major candidates with large groups of faith leaders. Big data targeting efforts focused upon voters' faith inclination were employed. Key issues in the race, such as the Supreme Court nominations, abortion and religious liberty, were intimately related to peoples' religious perspectives and passions. Numerous churches and religious coalitions held prayer rallies and fasting vigils. Like it or not, the importance of peoples' faith was front and center in this election.

"The mainstream media got a lot of things wrong in this election regarding their assessment of the role of faith," Barna continued. "One of those misdiagnoses was their assertion that the election featured a record-breaking turnout among evangelicals. While their turnout was strong, it was not record-breaking. In fact, evangelicals' concern over the character of both candidates kept many of them from

choosing a candidate until very late in the process, and a higher-than-usual proportion of them voted for the more liberal candidate.”

Barna concludes by identifying a telling factor in the election. “There has been no discussion about the fact that the skeptic vote really kept Hillary Clinton in the race. The 33-point margin she retained with that one-fifth slice of the voting population was her primary faith base. The size of the skeptic population continues to grow, while the born-again community continues to shrink. That is a trend that will be a major challenge for conservative and Republican candidates in the future.” {eoa}

[Click here to read the entire report.](#)