



How Would Jesus Vote?

I'm an Evangelical -- and a Liberal. Really.

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By Amy Sullivan

Sunday, February 24, 2008; B01

As an evangelical who worked in Democratic politics before entering journalism, I'm used to getting

voters," finally rose from their slumber. Kerry himself called on his colleagues to get over their discomfort with matters of faith.

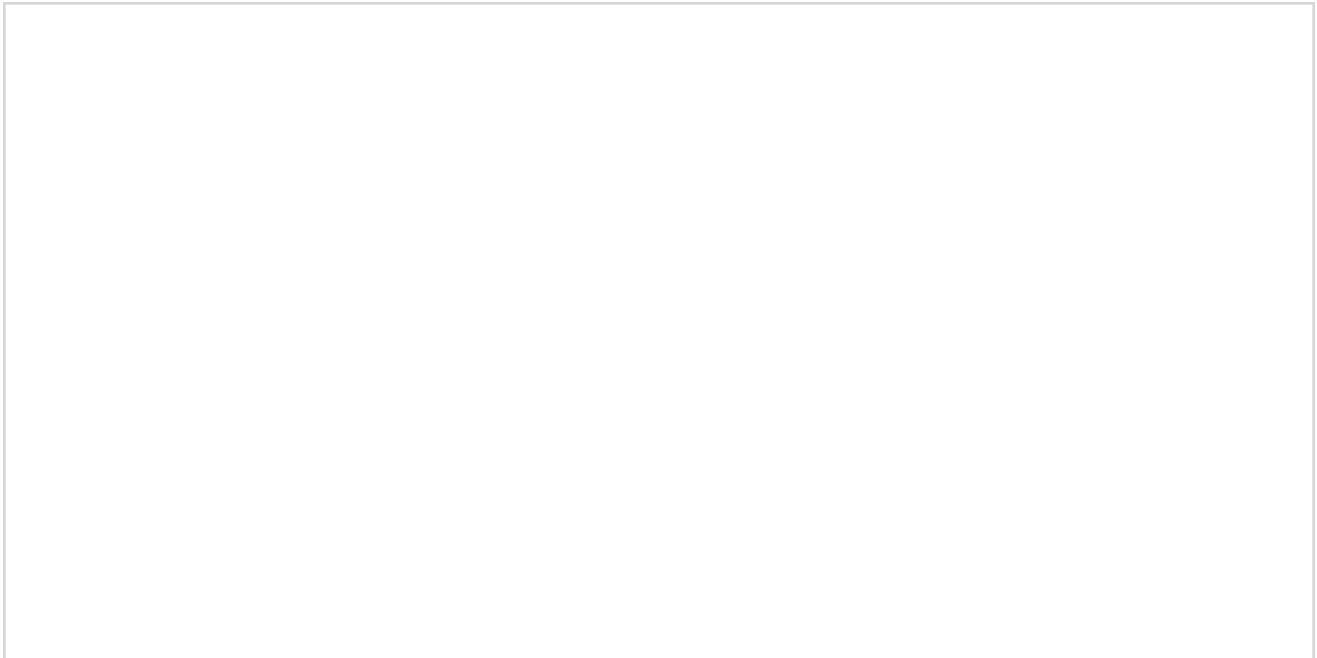
Most important, led by the two main contenders for the party's 2008 nomination, religious Democrats are publicly reclaiming their faith. I've gotten used to people coming out to me when I speak to Democratic audiences these days. "I'm religious, too," they'll whisper in my ear as they shake my hand quickly. Not long after the 2004 election, a congressional aide identified himself as an evangelical during a public Q&A. He told me afterward that it was the first time he'd "outed" himself in front of fellow Democrats. "How did it feel?" I asked. He paused. "A little scary," he said. "But good." Now he's one of a growing class of consultants who advise Democratic candidates about how to court religious voters.

The Democratic Party's decision to stop ignoring and start engaging the faithful is all the more striking when you consider that just three years ago, many Democrats blamed [President Bush](#)'s reelection on evangelical voters. They e-mailed one another a popular Internet graphic, a map showing the "United States of [Canada](#)" (encompassing all of Canada, along with Washington, [Oregon](#)

Walking through [Dulles Airport](#) not long after losing the 2004 election, John Kerry was stopped by a supporter. The man shook Kerry's hand and told the senator that he was an evangelical. "I voted for you," he said, "and so did a lot of evangelicals. But you could have gotten more of us if you'd tried." Kerry was floored. Evangelical *Democrats*?

No wonder Kerry fared worse among evangelicals than any other Democratic nominee in modern history, losing the votes of nearly four out of five. To engage a constituency, a campaign needs to at least know it exists.

Even so, the Democratic nominee this fall will have advantages Kerry never did. [Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) is a lifelong Methodist with years of experience teaching Sunday school in [Arkansas](#) who's married to the party's most prominent evangelical Democrat. Obama, a committed Christian, is more thoughtful and relaxed talking about religion than any other Democratic politician. Most important,



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