

# Too much faith talk? Religion accounted for 10 percent of news coverage during primaries: Religion accounted for 10 percent of news coverage during primaries

News in the [September 9, 2008](#) issue

In the presidential primaries, religion was the key topic in 10 percent of the news coverage, nearly equaling the amount of coverage (11 percent of stories) given to race and gender, according to Pew researchers.

After studying articles from 50 mainstream news outlets over 16 months, ending in April, the Pew project concluded that religion “could be at least as important in the 2008 presidential campaign as it was in 2000 and 2004.”

Not everyone think that’s wise. One analyst said he’d heard enough on the topic (“we are not electing a national pastor”), and another pundit wondered if Senator Barack Obama (D., Ill.) and fellow party leaders should be paying more attention to “the religiously lukewarm” swing voters.

Barry W. Lynn, a United Church of Christ minister who heads Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said on [Beliefnet.com](#) that there has been enough talk of faith and values. “Trust me, I love a good theological discussion as much as a good legal one,” he said, pointing out that CNN had had two “values” forums during the primary contests, “and we learned as much as we probably needed to know” about what candidates pray about, their favorite Bible story and how they mesh the theory of evolution with Genesis.

Polls by Survey USA, which divide voters into regular, occasional and “almost never” attenders of religious services, show that “the easiest voters on the faith spectrum to flip are the ‘occasionals,’” according to Mark Silk, director of the Leonard E.

Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, writing on its blog.