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November 2, 2008: Religion and the 2008 Campaign

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Title: Religion and the 2008 Campaign

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11/2/2008--Now that the campaign is almost over, and whoever wins, we can ask whether religion played much of a role. The obvious answer is, no. Religion, and other related issues, like gay rights, were overwhelmed by the economic catastrophe that affected almost all Americans, indeed much of the world. The less obvious answer is, no, but because the Democrats did so much to take it out of play. All through the primaries and the election, the Democrats constantly referred to God and did everything to seem faith-friendly—except changing their positions on substantive issues, which they did not do. The unlikely answer, though still a part of the story, is of course. The religious right ultimately got a candidate of its own after all: Governor Palin. And Senator Obama lost many votes over the religion issue, whether on substance, the Muslim rumor or Reverend Wright. And the fight within the Catholic Church over the permissibility of supporting a pro-choice candidate was truly something awesome to behold. I'm certain many votes will still be cast on religious grounds in 2008. P.S. A recent comment asked whether I have any enthusiasm for Barack Obama. I do. Quite a lot in fact, though the task facing the next President is monumental. It's just that I have supported and admired John McCain for a very long time. I think in 2000 he would have made a better President than Al Gore. But not a better one than Barack Obama in 2008, for reasons related both to Obama and to McCain.