

Religion & The Aftermath of the 2024 Election Webinar

Show Notes

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Question 1: Thoughts, feelings, and what you have been seeing in the communities you are in.

Katie: I traveled on the night of the election from California to Liberty University in Central Virginia. When I left, the airport was like a funeral, at that point Trump had a 90% chance of winning. When I landed in Virginia, the mood could not have been more different, in Virginia it was very celebratory. There was a lot of Maga hats, red clothing and some students even said they had seen more of this sense the results came out.

Nancy: I am in a hot swing state, Michigan, and the energy leading up to the election had a lot of us not surprises, we understood this election could go either way. The real energy was kind of solemn, a sense of there is not really a good outcome. The primary issue here in Michigan, with Arab and Muslim groups is the war and genocide in Palestine, that was really what drove so many people regardless of what decision they made and because they knew all the plausible options there was not much hope.

Eric: I taught a class at 9am the next day, we were reading Jeremiah Wright: Confusing God and Government Sermon and Obama's More Perfect Union Speech, and it was fitting. My students overall were expressing an elevated level of dismay, not just what it means nationally but also what it means for the state. Academics have been targets in this state (Texas). There are elevated levels of angst, depression, and frustration. A lot of people are worried, and some are not. It will be interesting to see how this shapes up in the midterms, who is still happy and who is ready to jump ship.

Question 2: Can you give us a sense of how religion, religious communities and ideologies shaped what we saw leading up to the election?

Katie: I have been studying Christian women on the right. What really strikes me is how headlines would refer to how "Trump has a woman problem" ... but as we can see with the exit polls is trump gained with a lot of women groups, it is clear he does not have a woman problem, at least when it comes to voters. So, the question for me is "why do women like him so much" and I cannot answer that definitively, I can only answer with what I have learned from these groups. I look at specifically white Christian women. What became clear in this election is that their identity, womanhood, gendered identity is under threat, and they see Trump as the person to

fix it and restore their “God-given” sense of womanhood. This is a unifying symbolic importance behind many of the issues they mention. What is new is the hooking onto a candidate, which we saw grow in more recent months.

Andrew: Is there anything that was shifting or changing in the relationship between conservative women, white Christian women, and Trump since 2016, or has it been steady?

Katie: The first shift is the strong coalition forming between these groups of religious women, we see some women wanting to convert to Catholicism, like Candace Owens or JD Vance. The second is the seeing Trump as one to fix the “deregulation in gender roles.” 2016, some women were hesitant towards him, but we have seen it grow. The third thing, in 2016 their focus was on immigration and whiteness, 2020 was focused on anti-black policies, the racialized other, but this year it seemed to go back to immigration rather than race.

Nancy: If there is one thing to capture it all is that Muslims really want to be heard, and they feel silenced and not heard. We saw many different instances of Muslims being silenced. I do not think the democratic party gave enough attention to the Muslim and Arab community.

Andrew: Those who did not vote or sat out of voting, what was significant for the people who did not vote, what forces were pushing their actions, especially those who did not vote?

Nancy: People were split on what to do, when it became clear that Muslims were bifurcated, the narrative became that we just need to get out and vote to express our political power. People were really concerned, there are also many concerns and ideas around the loss of votes and a loss of trust in the systems of power.

Eric: I think a lot of what was going on with Black voters is like what Nancy was pointing out too. It depended on “what can the democratic party do for us.” It also shows the breakdown in Black civic leadership. The Black church as we know it is decaying, there has been a major decline in participation, the growth of non-denominational are more conservative and have been in the Trump camp. Black voices, that tend to be counter to the interest of Black people, are getting more attention than others. We have also seen more Black churches making strong stances against homosexuality and the transgender community, and what this means going forward is not clear, but I think it is important to be aware. We see more men leaning towards republican because there is a concern from men in general, they feel like they are getting left behind, a loss of power, a loss of esteem and their hope is that Trump will bring that back.

Question 3: do you have a sense of what this might signal for the future? Whether it leads into the midterms or in 2028, how have things shifted?

Katie: it is hard to think about when still trying to understand what just happened. I think the young voters, the MAGA youth, will have a large impact on our politics, and the republican party. These kids were locked up during high school because of covid and came into this very polarized world, what has it done, what will it do and how is it going to shape what choices they make. What will it look like when they are the ones in charge, what will our country look like?

For Gen Z the way that information and news is shared is remarkably different than other generations. There are also implications in that, how people get the news and information that informs their ideas.

Nancy: I think the Muslim vote, around the country, was very bifurcated. So, what will happen in 2028 could go so many ways. On one side Muslims are very energized, they understand the political process and what you must do. That said there is also a lot of frustration with the two-party system and how it has failed them. So, what will win over we do not know. It is also an interesting moment because the genocide is still happening so until that ends and how that ends, I do not think people will be thinking of much else.