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WNET NEW YORK

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***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY* OFFERS SPECIAL ELECTION REPORTS  
FOCUSING ON ROLE OF RELIGION**

The intersection of religion and politics has been one of the most interesting — and complex — factors in recent national elections. And, in all likelihood, it will only become more important over the next two years. On October 6, the PBS newsmagazine program ***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY***, hosted by Bob Abernethy, will begin a special series of reports by correspondent Kim Lawton focusing on the role religion is expected to play in the upcoming November elections (check local listings for date and time).

The Hispanic community includes a broad range of voters of different national and religious backgrounds and they are once again expected to play a key role in the outcome of the November elections. In the first report of this special series, "Hispanic Voters," Lawton looks at the faith-based influences on the political views of Hispanics, how the immigration debate is galvanizing Latino voters, and what efforts are being undertaken by Hispanic Catholic and Pentecostal leaders to mobilize their local communities to get involved in the political process.

In the wake of the last election, many Democrats are re-examining the way their party handles issues of faith. Religious activists are reaching out to faith-based voters, and liberal and moderate people of faith are trying to organize a new grassroots political movement to counter the Religious Right. Can they do this without alienating secular voters — another major part of their base? In "Democrats and Religion," airing October 20, Lawton talks with Democratic leaders — including former presidential candidate Senator John Kerry — about issues of religion and politics, and what actions the Party needs to take to do a better job of reaching out to the faith community. Lawton also travels to such battleground states as Maryland and Michigan to explore challenges Democrats face in appealing to religious voters.

Religious conservatives played a significant role in George Bush's victory in 2004. But many have been disillusioned by the Iraq War and the lack of progress on some of their priority social issues. In the October 27 segment, "Republicans and Religion," Lawton looks at how these voters might influence the outcome of the upcoming elections, what is being done by the Republican Party to reach out to faith-based moderates, and how conservative religious leaders are using issues like gay marriage to galvanize voter turnout.



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Will the mid-term elections be a precursor for the 2008 presidential elections? In the final report, “Election 2008 Preview,” on November 3, Lawton talks with several leading experts on politics and religion, focusing on the key battleground state of Ohio, and looks at what potential presidential nominees and faith-based grassroots groups are doing to reach out to religious communities in preparation for the 2008 campaign.

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