

I want to start with the question on most people's minds in the wake of last week's elections: Was Mitt Romney's religion an important—or perhaps even the most important—factor in his failure to secure the GOP nomination? To the extent that Republican voters did vote with regard to his religion, do you think they did so because of the religious faith or in spite of it?

Christ said you should love your enemies and do good to people who spitefully use you. I think some of the behavior of the "Christian" right was really not very Christ-like—not the sort of thing that Christ would have done. But

God-fearing are the ones .1(n)4.5(e b)5(e-o)g20.50)-2 ally the least tolerant. Maybe a Democrat would've been more successful; Harry Reid certainly draws little flak from the Democrats.

Is it bigoted to reject a candidate for their religious beliefs, or is simply an allowable recognition of difference?

When voting for someone, you want to predict what actions they will take once elected. I'm not sure

in some ways, I think maybe Mitt took a lot of the early volleys of ammunition that were shot at Mormons, and the next time around it may not be quite as vicious.

It is very interesting to me that, living in Massachusetts, it's almost politically incorrect to speak ill of someone because of their religion in what may be one of the most godless states in America. Yet those who have framed themselves as being

What do you think this says about the future of the LDS Church in American politics? What kind of lessons can be learned? Would the outcome be different in the Democratic primaries?

which was a fact of life 30 years ago—is just much less prevalent today, and the same goes for Catholics.

I think the Mormons—and I don't know if it's a problem or a virtue—have taken this situation in the way that Christ said one ought to take it on the Sermon on the Mount: do good to people who spitefully use you. I hope we can figure out how

somehow destined for world domination or supremacy or anything of that sort.

In fact, as we do our missionary service, regardless of how much you suffer, you always leave half your heart in your host country. And so I think, consequently, Mormons probably have less of an inclination to view America as somehow destined by God to dominate the world just because we have, I think, a better worldview.

In a way is this a sort of Jesuitical engagement with the culture that missionaries undertake?

“Jesuitical” is a great comparison. You don’t get to know India on the 24th floor of the Mumbai Hilton. You get to know it by living with the people and working with them everyday.

Is there a meaningful distinction, then, that differentiates the LDS Church’s model of American exceptionalism from the more mainline Protestant/Evangelical model of American exceptionalism?

Absolutely. If your understanding of God’s purpose in fostering the creation of this country was to permit religious freedom, then to have the view that we can’t tolerate somebody, whose religious views are different than ours,

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