MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Professor David Campbell is here, and we’re delighted because he is writing a book on the subject of our topic this morning. David Campbell did his Ph.D. in political science at Harvard University working with Robert Putnam, and he’s now a professor at Notre Dame in political science, and we couldn’t think of a more important topical subject or a better person than Professor David Campbell to be with us this morning.

So we’re delighted, Dave, that you could be with us. Thank you for coming.

DR. DAVID CAMPBELL: I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk with you today. I’m going to talk today about Mormons and American politics, and I’ve titled this “A Peculiar People?” with a question mark. This is an expression that many members of the LDS Church will actually use to describe themselves. It’s scriptural, and I assure you it is not pejorative to refer to someone who is LDS as “peculiar.” If anything, it’s a badge of honor.

Let me begin by noting that when it comes to my work on Mormons or Latter Day Saints, I am somewhat of an insider because I myself am Mormon (but I’m not American!) However, I would prefer not to be known as the Mormon political scientist, but rather as the political scientist who just happens to be Mormon.

So I’m happy to talk about the ins and outs of Mormonism, and today I’m going to be reporting on data that is not Mormon-specific at all. Anybody could have analyzed these data and come to the same conclusions that I have.

The LDS Church has a lot of syllables in it: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. So throughout this presentation I will use the terms “LDS Church,” “Latter Day Saints,” and “Mormons” all interchangeably. However, when I speak of Mormons, I will be speaking of those who are actually members of that said church, and not necessarily those on the fringes who will take that label but are not members of the Salt Lake City-
headquartered LDS Church. Otherwise we’ll just spend too much time with me repeating the same syllables over and over and over.

So with all that in mind, let me begin with my presentation. It should probably come as no surprise that at this time, as we prepare for the 2012 presidential election, we’d be talking about Mormons. Some have called this “the Mormon Moment,” with all sorts of things related to Mormonism in popular culture. There’s the Broadway musical. There are various programs in television.

But maybe some of you have also noted that we have not one but actually two presidential candidates this year in the Republican primaries who are themselves Mormon, John Huntsman, Jr., of course, and then Mitt Romney, who is very likely to win the nomination or at least to come very close.

And so today I will talk a little bit about some work I’ve done in how voters respond to information about Mitt Romney’s religious background, and we’ll talk a little bit about how it is that voters perceive his Mormonism, and then what we might think of as buffers to information that are sometimes provided about Mormons when they run for office.

I should also note that in the midst of “the Mormon Moment,” as this is sometimes called, the LDS Church is, itself engaged in a public relations campaign known as the “I’m a Mormon” campaign. Some of you may live in parts of the country where this campaign is running. I happen to be right now—in Indiana. The campaign is running there.
What you’re looking at here is a billboard in Times Square that the LDS Church put up a while back to sort of capitalize on the publicity surrounding the Broadway musical. I mention this because it’s actually a good example of how the LDS Church has had to, I think, deal with what for many Americans is a negative perception, and again, I’ll talk a little bit about the sources of those negative perceptions and then what acts as a buffer to them.

So my remarks today will be organized into two parts. First, I’m going to talk about what contemporary Mormons are like, and then secondly, I will talk about what Americans think of Mormons, and that’s where I’ll focus specifically on what we know about voters’ reactions to Mitt Romney and his religious background in particular.

So Chapter 1, what Mormons are like. The metaphor that I would like to introduce here is that when we speak of Mormons and, in particular, Mormons or Latter Day Saints in politics, you can think of them as being like dry kindling, by which I mean that they can be rapidly mobilized. So think of dropping a match into kindling. However, this sort of mobilization can only happen rarely. When it happens it can be intense and effective, but it doesn’t happen very often, and in fact, its infrequency is what relates to its intensity; if this sort of mobilization were attempted on a regular basis, it would cease to be effective. It is its rarity that catches the attention of members of the LDS Church and I would argue leads them to respond.

There are some preexisting conditions for the political mobilization of American Mormons, and that’s what I’ll spend the bulk of my time talking about here in the first chapter of my remarks. So you can think of the following: the Mormons are conservative, and I’ll show you some evidence of just what it means to say that Mormons are conservative. How conservative are they? What does it mean to say that they are politically conservative?

But in addition to being conservative, they are in many respects distinctive, and I’ll show you some evidence today that Mormons do not necessarily fit easily within the rest of the conservative coalition within the United States. They have some fairly distinctive opinions on a number of issues.
They are also a group that are highly active both within their own faith, but also in their communities. Again, I’ll show you some evidence of that.

And finally, Mormons are a very cohesive group.

It is these four factors together that actually enable the rapid and intense political mobilization that I have referred to and that there has been some examples of over the last decade or so.

So let’s begin with the claim that Mormons are conservative. What do I mean when I say that? Let me describe the source of data that I’ll be using. I published a book about a year ago with Bob Putnam at Harvard entitled, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. The backbone of that book is the Faith Matters Survey, and that’s the source of data that I’ll be using for the results that I’ll talk about today.

This is a nationally representative survey of roughly 3,100 people that we did in 2006. We then re-interviewed the same people in 2007, and we then returned to them in 2011 and interviewed them a third time. That third wave does not appear in the book *American Grace* because we hadn’t collected the data when we wrote the book, but it will appear in an upcoming edition of the book.

Today I will be reporting from the 2011 data. Everything that I’m showing you from 2011 held in 2006 and 2007 as well, so what we’re talking about is a representative sample of the American population and, therefore, a representative sample of American Mormons compared to samples of Evangelicals, mainline Protestants and all the other major religious traditions in America. At the end of my presentation I’ll show you some evidence from another source of data that we’ve collected that involves experimental work.

Let me move on to this claim that Mormons are conservative. In this particular slide, we’re looking at the percentage in each group who report identifying with the Republican Party, and as you can see, Mormons are by just a hair the most Republican of these religious traditions in America. They are a shade more likely to be Republicans than Evangelicals and mainline Protestants.
This is widely known. It’s also the case that Mormons are the most likely to describe themselves as very conservative. This is if you’re given an option to choose between very conservative, conservative, moderate, somewhat liberal or very liberal. Mormons are the most likely to say that they are very conservative.
You can see that while Mormons are pretty likely to call themselves very conservative, more so than any other group, it’s not like an overwhelming majority or even a majority at all say so. It’s only about 25 to 28 percent of Mormons who describe themselves as very conservative.

If I put the conservative line up there, too, that increases the numbers considerably. It doesn’t change the relative height of the bars compared to the other groups, but it does give you a sense that while some Mormons are happy to take on the label of very conservative, they’re not necessarily all in that same camp.

Similarly, when we look at support for the Tea Party, you find that Mormons are relatively high on their level of support for the Tea Party, roughly the same as Evangelicals and mainline Protestants. If you look at that white section of the bar, those are the people who strongly agree with the Tea Party, and you’ll see that Mormons are a little more likely to strongly agree with the Tea Party than are other groups in the population, but we’re still only talking about a third of the Mormon population. So not even a majority say that they support the Tea Party movement.
So that hopefully gives you a little bit of a sense of what we mean when we say that Mormons are conservative. They are. But we don’t want to overstate that. There is a strong strain of moderation within the Mormon population. But they are staunch supporters of the Republican Party, and if I would have put presidential vote up on a slide, you’d see that Mormons voted overwhelmingly in 2000 and 2004 for George W. Bush, as they did for John McCain in 2008.

And that is where the story of the political profile of American Mormons often ends. Mormons are a conservative Republican bunch, period.

It turns out, however, that that is not the whole story, that Mormons are actually quite a distinctive group. They’re distinctive in some ways that make them perhaps even more conservative than you might expect and then in other ways less conservative or at least conservatism with some nuance that maybe doesn’t get quite as much attention.

So let’s begin with an example of where Mormons are quite conservative, and that is on the question of gender roles. On the Faith Matters Survey, we asked Americans whether they thought it was better if a husband and a wife share in child rearing and both have a career or is it better if women stayed home and don’t work. And you can see that by a long shot, Mormons are the most likely to say that it’s better if women do not work and stay at home. Almost two-thirds of Mormons select that response, much higher than any other group in America. So when it comes to gender roles, this is a highly conservative traditionalist group.
But there are other issues for which that’s not the case. One in particular is on immigration. On the question of immigration, Mormons stand out from the conservative crowd. So what this slide shows you is the percentage of each of these groups who, when asked whether immigration should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same, this is the percentage who say that immigration should be increased.
I should note that I have seen other data that has asked questions about immigration in other ways, and the results always turn out the same way, that Mormons are actually either enthusiastic about immigration or at the very least they do not want to see immigration rolled back. I mentioned that just so you don’t think this is some idiosyncratic result because of the way we asked this particular question.

Mormons score much higher than Evangelicals and mainline Protestants and a little bit higher than Catholics when it comes to this question of immigration. The only group that is more receptive to immigrants than Mormons are Jews. In fact, it’s interesting to note that Mormons and Jews are the two groups in the population who are perhaps most sympathetic to immigrants.

It’s probably not a surprise that Jews would be. It might be a little more of a surprise that Mormons would be given that this is a highly conservative group, and we usually don’t think of conservatives as being terribly warm toward immigration.

Well, there are a number of possible explanations for this. One that has been put forward is that Mormons think of themselves as a minority group. Immigrants are by definition a minority group, and so they feel sympathy with immigrants.
Another, the one that I find most persuasive is that a number of members of the LDS Church actually work in other countries for 18 months to 24 months as volunteer missionaries. They often do this when they’re young, and in many cases they end up in Latin America, the countries that are sending immigrants to America, and so I think it’s plausible these folks develop a sympathy toward those of other countries and who speak other languages because of their missionary experience.

But I don’t want to make it sound as though everything is utopian when it comes to how Mormons view immigration. Actually as a population, Mormons are somewhat conflicted on the question. So what you’re looking at here are two bars that compare those who say that immigration should be increased. You saw that before. That’s the red bar, versus those who say that immigration should be decreased. The way to interpret this slide is the closer those two bars are to one another for any one group, the more divided the group is. So if the two bars are exactly the same height it would mean that the group splits 50-50 on those two options.

And as you can see Mormons are actually somewhat more conflicted than many other groups. Compare them to, say, Evangelicals. Evangelicals are far more likely to say decreased than increased; for Mormons, the gap is much less. It suggests that this is an
issue that is not settled within the Mormon community, and that would also fit our understanding of the way this is unfolding in the Mountain West, where you find many American Mormons concentrated.

Here’s another area where you find some nuance. On the Faith Matters Survey we asked a question about civil liberties. Do they think it was more important to protect civil liberties or was it more important to protect personal security? And so on this question you would expect conservatives and Republicans to be more likely to favor safety over civil liberties, but actually among Mormons you find exactly the opposite. Mormons are actually more likely to take the civil liberties side of that question than they are the safety and security side.

And you can see here how Mormons compare on the civil liberties question versus Evangelicals and other groups, and you can see that once again, Mormons rank along with Jews and those who have no religion in particular when it comes to this question, and as I’ve suggested, this kind of makes them look like liberals or at least Libertarians, which is probably the right way to think of it. On this particular question, this is a group that is at least somewhat suspicious of the emphasis that is sometimes placed on safety and security over personal liberty.
UNKNOWN SPEAKER: How was that question asked exactly?

DAVID CAMPBELL: We forced them to make a tradeoff. It was personal security versus civil liberties, and the lead-in to the question made a reference to terrorism so that we wanted them to be thinking about the debates over homeland security and such.

SHELBY COFFEY, Newseum: On the immigration questions, was there any distinction made between legal and illegal immigration?

DAVID CAMPBELL: This particular question references legal immigration, and so you’re asked whether or not you think we should have more legal immigration, less, or should it be kept about the same. I have seen other questions that do reference illegal immigrants, and it also appears that Mormons are a little more sympathetic to the undocumented, but I don’t have good numbers on that. Those are just sort of hints and whispers in the data.

The one issue that Mormons are always associated with, and that is same sex marriage. We asked a question that asked people to make a choice between three options. They could support gay marriage, they could support civil unions, but not marriage per se, or they could oppose any legal recognition of homosexual relationships.

What the graph shows you in the red is the percentage of each group who say no to marriage and no to civil unions. The white shows you the percentage who say that civil unions would be acceptable but not marriage.
Now, those two categories together (that is, no gay marriage or no gay marriage but civil unions are okay) reflect opposition in some respect to gay marriage. When we consider those two options together, Mormons are clearly the most likely to oppose gay marriage in the population.

What I find interesting here though is the percentage of Mormons who oppose gay marriage but are nonetheless okay with civil unions, and you’ll see that’s actually a fairly large portion of the LDS population.

The survey question just used the term “civil union.” So we never know what’s inside someone’s head when they’re answering it. I would define it as those states that permit legal recognition of a same sex couple so that they could have hospital visitation rights and all those sorts of things, but not actually call it marriage. At least that’s how we were intending the question to be interpreted.

And so there you see again another little bit of evidence that there’s actually a strain of moderation within this population.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Is there also a great age disparity in there? I know among Evangelicals, younger Evangelicals feel very differently from older ones on this subject.
DAVID CAMPBELL: It’s really hard for me to actually parse this particular sample any further than to just talk about Mormons in general, and the reason is we don’t have that many Mormons to begin with. They’re a group that’s about three percent of the population. There are roughly the same number of Mormons as Jews. And so even with a big survey of 3,100, we still only end up with something like 50 or 60 Mormons, so it’s hard for me to divvy them up.

To the extent that I have done that and have done it in other data sets, Mormons are actually a little bit of an exception to that generalization. We normally think of young people being more accepting of gay marriage than their elders, and that’s certainly true in the general population. You see hints of that in the LDS population, but certainly not to the extent that you do in the Evangelical group.

And my guess would be that when we have a larger sample of Mormons, we will be able to say more about these sort of subdivisions within the group; my hunch would be that you would find young Mormons in this group. They’re the ones that would be accepting the civil unions, but I would be surprised if there would be many young, at least young devout Mormons, who would be accepting of gay marriage per se.

So that’s how Mormons react to the issue of gay marriage, one of the two big culture war issues, and the other, of course, is abortion. Abortion is perhaps an even more striking example of Mormon distinctiveness than gay marriage. We asked a question about abortion that gives people a variety of different options of when they would or would not approve of abortion.

So in this graph, those who are in the red category are those who say that abortion should never be permitted under any circumstances. The white portion of the bar represents those who say no abortion except for the big three exceptions: rape, incest, and when the health of the mother is in jeopardy.
And then there are other options. One is that abortion should be permitted, but only when there’s a good reason, and then the fourth is that abortion should be permitted at any time for any reason. The government should have no say in any regulation of abortion.

So I’ve just put the two what you might think of as pro-life categories together, and you can see that when you add them up, that is, those who say no abortion under any circumstances or those who say no abortion except for the three exceptions, Mormons look a lot like Evangelicals and Catholics. They’re right along the same level.

Where the story is interesting is the fact that almost no Mormons actually say that abortion should never be permitted. It’s a tiny percentage; the bulk of the Mormon population is saying that abortion should not be permitted, except under these three exceptions. And this also happens to be the official policy of the LDS Church that in general abortion is strongly discouraged, but it can be permitted under this small number of circumstances, and this is a case where Mormons seem to very clearly understand the policy of their own church.

And note that I’m using the term “policy” and not “theology.” This is where my lifetime as a Mormon becomes relevant. I have never in my experience ever heard a sermon in
any LDS meeting either at a local, regional or global level that was entirely on the subject of abortion. I have heard abortion come up, but it has always been in the context of talking about other things happening in society. So it will be one thing that’s mentioned among other things, but I’ve never heard an entire sermon on abortion.

I mention that because unlike the traditional family, which I think it is fair to say is an emphasis of the LDS Church, abortion is not, at least not in the same way that you would find it within Evangelical or Catholic Churches. It’s mentioned. It’s there. There’s a policy on when it’s permitted and when it’s not, but it’s not a central point that is made sort of from a doctrinal grounding, and it’s certainly not something that is emphasized on a regular basis in LDS meetings in the way that it might be for other religious traditions.

That’s all some evidence on how Mormons are distinctive. They’re a conservative group, but conservatism with some nuance. Let me move on now and talk about the fact that Mormons are active, and what do I mean by that? I mean that this is a group that whether we’re looking at activity done within their faith or activity outside of their faith but in their community, it’s hard to find a group in the American population who is more engaged than are American Mormons, and I’ll just show you a little bit of evidence for that.
Then it comes to religious activity, this slide shows you the percentage of each of these groups who report attending religious services on a weekly basis—that’s the red line—who report praying on a daily basis—that’s the white line—or who report reading scripture on a daily basis. And you can see that in each one of those cases Mormons score higher by a long shot than anyone else in the population.

Now, I want to pause here and make an important note about the way these surveys work. I am not going to claim here that 85 percent of all people on the rolls of the LDS Church are in religious services every week. So how do we interpret this?

Well, certainly 85 percent of those people who identified themselves as Mormons in our survey want us to think that they are in church every week. That’s important to note, and not unusual. Most religious groups in America have that same normative expectation, but perhaps just as importantly, I’m betting that when someone answers a survey question of what religion they are, if they tell us that they are Mormon, if they self-identify, that in and of itself indicates that they consider themselves to be fully within this tradition; I suspect that there are a number of people who may have even been respondents to our survey who may have at some time been members of or had some affiliation with the Mormon Church, but they are not currently, and so when they’re asked the survey question, “What are you?” they don’t answer Mormon. So we’re probably missing some group in the population who might appear on the rolls of the LDS Church because at some point they have been baptized into the faith or they were raised in the faith but no longer identify with it, which boosts the overall numbers for our respondents when we’re looking at Mormon behavior.

But nonetheless, this is a group that is highly active in its own faith. That includes volunteering, the idea that Mormons can be rapidly mobilized into politics.

This shows you the percentage of Mormons who say that they have engaged in the last 12 months in some sort of volunteer activity for their religion, and the white line is the percentage in each of these groups who say that they have given more than $1,000 to their church [within 12 months].
Now, this just shows you the percentage who say they give more than $1,000. You might say, “Well, $1,000 to somebody might be a lot of money, but to somebody else not so much. It would sort of depend on your household income.”

I have actually run these numbers where I account for the household income of these folks, and the numbers look the same. Mormons are much higher than everyone else. So I just decided to report the simpler form of the data here.

You can see that Mormons are much higher both in their giving and also in their volunteering, and I should also note that this might even understate Mormon religious volunteering because Mormons don’t go around referring to themselves as religious volunteers. They actually have a vocabulary. They refer to “holding a calling” within their church, that’s the Mormon term. We didn’t use that word in the survey because we were asking people of many different traditions about their activity.

So if Mormons are a highly volunteeristic group within their own religion, does that mean that they pull out of their community, that they devote all of their time and energy to their church? Their church, after all, has a structure with no paid clergy, and therefore, it takes a lot of volunteers to run a Mormon congregation because somebody has got to do all the stuff that otherwise would have been done by a full-time pastor.
And, in fact, if you were to speak to Latter-day Saints themselves, I have found in my own experience that many members of the church believe that their high level of activity collectively within the church actually means that they’re not involved in their communities. Well, it turns out that when you look at the data, Mormons are a highly engaged group—not only in their own church, but also in their community.

Now, this should not come as a surprise because it turns out that highly religious people, in general, regardless of their tradition, are more likely to be involved in their communities. It’s true for Evangelicals, it’s true for Catholics, it’s true for any group you can think of, and it’s also true for Mormons. So it stands to reason that Mormons are a highly active group in their own faith, that they would also be highly active in their own communities.

The percentages of those who are engaged in community or civic activity are not as high as those who are involved in religious activity or religious volunteering, but when we look at those civic activities among Mormons, they are in most cases a little bit higher and sometimes a lot higher than the rates in other groups.
We’ve got all of this civic activity going on, much of it within the church, some of it beyond the church and in the community, what does that say about Mormon political involvement?

Well, it turns out that Mormons participate in politics at about the same rate as most everyone else. So they’re more likely to be volunteers in all of these non-political civic activities, but not necessarily when it comes to politics. They’re not any less involved, but neither are they any more involved. This shows you the percentage of each group who say they vote in all or most local elections. That’s the red line who report having contacted a government official. That’s the white line, and the black one is whether they’ve ever attended a political rally, and you can see that in each case the Mormons are neither more nor less involved than anybody else. So we’ve got lots of volunteering going on, but not necessarily a higher than average level of political activity.

This brings me to the fourth characteristic of the Mormon population in America, and that’s the fact that Mormons are cohesive. When you look at different religious groups and how much they bond, that is, have bridges not with people of other faiths but instead with those of their own faith, Mormons truly stand out. This slide shows you the results from an index. This is a series of questions that ask about whether you have neighbors of a different religion, whether you have friends of another religion, whether you have
family members of another religion. Put those questions together, and we can sort of see who falls in the top level of religious homogeneity, that is, the most likely to have friends, family and neighbors of the same faith.

The white bar that I’ve drawn across the slide is 25 percent, and that’s critical here because what I’m reporting is the percentage of each group who fall into the top quartile compared to the rest of the population in this religious bonding index. In other words, if a group falls above that white line, they are more likely to bond religiously than the population as a whole.

And as you look at that, you can see that there are three groups that stand out for their level of bonding: one, Latino Catholics, (but not Anglo Catholics); the second, black Protestants; the third, Mormons. And you can probably see that there is a difference between Mormons and the other two categories in that the other two categories also have a racial or ethnic group in their very label. In other words, Mormons bond as much as do African Americans or specifically black Protestants. That’s most African Americans in the country. And Latino Catholics. Again, that’s most Latinos in the country.

That is striking, and much more so than Evangelicals and Jews. Jews are important because, as I mentioned earlier, there are about as many Mormons in America as there
are Jews. So it’s not the size of the group that’s driving this. And I mentioned Evangelicals because in many respects Evangelicals are a group that have a lot of the same kind of social characteristics as Mormons, and yet you don’t find Evangelicals bonding as much as Mormons.

When we put all of that together, it suggests that this is a group that has a latent potential for political mobilization. They’re politically conservative. They fall in one end of the political spectrum. They’re somewhat distinctive as a group. They are very active in their own faith. They have learned to be involved. They’ve learned all of those organizational skills and built all those personal networks that enable people to get involved in politics, and they are a cohesive group. All of that would suggest that this is a group that is ripe for political mobilization.

PAUL EDWARDS, Deseret News: The family was one of the categories. Does that include intermarriage or did you ask separately?

DR. CAMPBELL: In the index that I was just reporting, it does not include your spouse. We did ask a lot of questions about interfaith marriage, but for that index we only asked about your extended family, not about your spouse.

It turns out, as you would expect, that Mormons are relatively high in marrying people of the same faith, although perhaps not as high as you might think. They’re also extremely high in their belief that you ought to marry someone of your own faith, mainly because that is an article of faith of the LDS Church.

The question then is: are Mormons mobilized into politics? We asked a question in the Faith Matters Survey about whether you ever hear sermons on political or social issues. You could say you never do, or that you hear them once in a while. This reports the percentage who say they hear such sermons once or twice a month.
And, again, I want to emphasize we’ve asked about other types of politicking at church and the results look essentially the same, and that result is Mormons are always at the lowest end of the scale. In fact, on this question, do you ever hear sermons on political or social issues, essentially zero Mormons—it’s like one or two percent or some, you know, tiny, tiny percentage of Mormons say that they hear political sermons at church.

Now, again, I put the whole scale here to show you that it’s not like any other group is reporting this on an extremely frequent basis. Even Jews and black Protestants, the two groups that are the most likely to have politics at their religious services, even they are nowhere near a majority reporting political sermons with this frequency. But even with that relatively low baseline across the country, you find Mormons are extremely low.

Now, this doesn’t mean that what’s said and done in an LDS meeting doesn’t have political significance. You might hear a sermon or a lesson on self-sufficiency, and then somebody might in their own mind make a connection between that and their attitude toward the welfare state, but that’s different than having a religious leader stand and encourage you to vote a particular way or to devote a sermon to a political topic. You just don’t find that happening in LDS meetings except on very rare occasions, and that’s why I used the
metaphor of the dry kindling, that those characteristics that I've described in the LDS population actually do enable this group to be mobilized under the following conditions.

When LDS leaders endorse an issue and present a united front, we have seen Latter-day Saints respond quite enthusiastically to the political guidance of their leaders. We saw this in California during the Proposition 8 campaign. You’ll remember Proposition 8 was a ballot initiative in California to write a ban on same sex marriage into the state constitution. There had been an earlier ballot initiative to make a ban on same sex marriage the law of California in the year 2000. The LDS Church was involved in that as well. And so when in the case of California and a few other examples, sometimes on same sex marriage, sometimes on issues like gambling, when LDS leaders take a stand, their members respond, and they respond with enthusiasm. So this is a group that has the skills and the experience and the social networks and the issue attitudes that combine that enable them to be a force in politics.

But it’s important to note that this happens rarely, and it’s because it is rare that it is effective. If it were to happen more often, it wouldn’t be as effective each time, and it’s also important to note that the LDS Church has in modern times only ever spoken out on ballot propositions, not on partisan elections.

I’ve been talking about Mormons as a group, their characteristics. Now I’d like to talk about the rest of the population and how they perceive Mormons or, more specifically, what that perception means for Mitt Romney, presidential candidate.

Earlier I showed you how Mormons are a cohesive group, but it’s important to note that that cohesiveness is at least plausibly related to the way Mormons are perceived by the rest of the population. On the Faith Matters Survey, we asked a question using a tool that has a very hokey name, a feeling thermometer. This is a question on a survey that asks the respondent to rate a group, a person, a political party, etc. In this case it was religious groups. Respondents were asked to rate this group on a scale of zero to 100, zero meaning you feel very cold toward that group, 100 meaning you feel very warm, 50 meaning you feel neutral, and you can pick any number in between.
What this slide shows you is how each of these groups are perceived by the rest of the population, and so in calculating this we have taken out members of the group in question. So this is how non-Jews feel about Jews. This is how non-Catholics feel about Catholics. This is how non-Mormons feel about Mormons.

This comes out of *American Grace*. Note that the two most popular religious groups in America today are Jews and Catholics. On the other end of the scale we have groups that are not viewed so positively. So we have atheists and Muslims, and then we have Mormons. Now, I put this white line here. This is the midpoint, the neutral point, and you can see that Mormons score below that neutral point whereas most groups score above.

This is an interesting question. Why are Mormons viewed negatively? Well it can’t be the size of the group. There are as many Mormons in America as Jews. There must be something else that’s going on here.

But before I get to that--this contrasts how the rest of the population feels about a group. That’s the red bar. The white bar is how that group feels about themselves, and Mormons feel pretty good about themselves.
You’ve got this sort of interesting mix. This is a group that’s negatively perceived by everybody else, that feels positive about themselves. That sure feels like a beleaguered minority. That sort of feels like a group that is embattled, and there’s some good reason for Mormons to feel embattled that way. Let me show you a bit of data on presidential candidates.

Going back to the 1960s, the Gallup poll has asked people how they would feel about a Mormon presidential candidate. Now, they’ve asked this of lots of different groups. It goes back even further for Jews and women and blacks, but this just shows you Catholics, Jews, and Mormons beginning in the ’60s going up to the present day. The question is worded, “If your party nominated a generally well qualified person who happened to be a Catholic, a Jew, a Mormon, would you vote for that person?” This chart shows you the percentage who say “yes.”
Let me note a couple of things. Virtually all Americans say they would vote for a Catholic or a Jew. Now, Gallup first asked about Mormons back in 1968 because of George Romney, governor of Michigan and father of Mitt, who was running for the presidency. About 25 percent of the population at the time said they would not vote for a Mormon for President. And as you can see, in the years since that line has remained essentially flat. That’s where we’re at now. Even after all of the attention paid to Mitt Romney’s religion in 2008, we still didn’t see that line budge very much.

I wanted to dig deeper and understand why Americans might have a concern with Mormons. Some colleagues and I have designed these experiments that I referred to earlier. We have a whole bunch of people who are responding to a survey. Some get a description of one candidate with a bit of biographical information. Another get a description of that same candidate with some other biographical information, and we see how these respondents react to the information that we give them.

In one case you might read about Mitt Romney and hear about him being governor of Massachusetts the head of the winter Olympics in 2002. Other people would hear all of that, as well as the fact that he is active in the Mormon Church.
And we did the same thing with Mike Huckabee, and the fact that he’s a Southern Baptist pastor, and then just for fun we also asked about Hillary Clinton and gave some people the information that she was an active Methodist.

I should note that when we do these experiments, everything we tell respondents is truthful. We never repeat any charge that can’t be verified. Therefore, when we tell people something about Mormons we are not telling them anything that is scurrilous.

This shows you the percentage of people who say they are much less, somewhat less, somewhat more or much more likely to vote for Romney when we tell them that he is a local leader in his church, without naming the church. As you look across those red bars, you can see that they’re really small, which means that just saying that Mitt Romney was active in his church didn’t really have much effect on voters at all.

These questions were asked back in 2008 when it’s plausible to think that many voters were not aware of Mitt Romney’s religious background. If we were to do these now, and we actually have done some subsequent work, it looks as though most Americans or many Americans anyway are now familiar with Mitt Romney’s religious background.
The white bars reflect what happens when we say that the church in question is actually the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormon Church. You can see that the bars jump for those who say they are either much less or somewhat less likely to vote for Romney upon hearing that information, and likewise the percentage who say they’re somewhat more or much more likely goes down. You’d expect those bars to move in opposite directions.

And you can compare that to information about Mike Huckabee, the fact that he’s a Southern Baptist pastor, or Hillary Clinton. We wanted to test this just to make sure that it wasn’t giving somebody a specific religion that drove the reaction, that it was actually the LDS affiliation that mattered. It’s clear that it is the LDS or Mormon affiliation that matters. You get a little bit of a reaction to the fact that Mike Huckabee is a Southern Baptist pastor, but not much.

There was a second part to this study. We asked people about their reactions to these bits of information from their biographies, but then we went on and for some of these folks we actually said not just that Mitt Romney was active in the Mormon Church, but that some people say Mormons are not Christians. Thus, some respondents got that information, and then others were told some people say that Mormons aren’t Christian but other people say that that doesn’t matter, that faith ought to be irrelevant when we’re making political choices. This was essentially John F. Kennedy’s argument in 1960 when he ran for the presidency as a Catholic.

And then with another group we said Mormons aren’t Christians, but they have the same values as people of other religions. That’s essentially the argument that Mitt Romney made in his big religion speech in 2007 as he was running for the presidency the first time.

So we wanted to know how do people respond to what you might think of as counter arguments to this concern that Mormons are not Christian. And then we wanted to understand what might be a buffer to what would for most Americans be a negative charge that Mormons are not Christian. The most plausible one we came up with was whether or not you know a Mormon. What I’m going to do is compare how people respond to these various questions by looking at those who say they do not know a Mormon, those who have a close friend or family member who’s a Mormon, and then
finally we’ll look at people who are in between. They know a Mormon but only in passing. They have a Mormon acquaintance, but not someone they’re close to.
If you want to just sort of put this all together, I’d say that those who do not know a Mormon can be reassured or at least persuaded that it’s okay to vote for a Mormon. Those who have Mormons as a close friend or family member, they’re actually not affected by the negative information in the first place. They’ve made up their minds, and for the most part it’s not negative on the question of whether they would vote for a Mormon. The interesting result is the group who have a Mormon acquaintance. These are the folks who, on the one hand, are persuaded when they hear that Mormons are not Christian, but these counterarguments make no difference whatsoever.

What appears to be happening is these are folks who are aware that there’s something different about Mormons because they know one in passing. They have a Mormon neighbor; they have a Mormon co-worker, but they haven’t developed that kind of personal relationship that enables them to get over any sort of concern that they might have about this different faith or different group. This should be a sobering message for Mormons themselves that all of that bonding has actually worked to their detriment in fostering goodwill among those of other faiths.

To conclude, let me just return to where we began, and that’s the fact that, as some have said, this is the Mormon Moment. It’s interesting to ask whether the Mormon Moment
means it’s Romney’s year, which leads us to ask whether Mitt Romney will be the Mormon’s John Kennedy, the candidate who breaks through the stained glass ceiling, or will he be the Mormon’s Al Smith, who was the first Catholic to run for President and didn’t shatter that stained glass ceiling, but nonetheless laid the groundwork for Kennedy 28 years later?

Thank you.

DR. PETER BERGER, Boston University: How did you decide whether you called somebody Evangelical or mainline Protestant? And you said something by simply the group to which they were affiliated. Well, this dividing line runs through denominations. For example, with a Methodist you couldn’t tell. If all you know is Methodist, they could be a flaming fundamentalist or a flaming liberal. You wouldn’t mainline type.

The other question is more complicated. I was asking myself why these surprising findings. I don’t think it works with the pro exceptions for abortion case, but the other three, I was wondering if they all have to do with what some political scientists have called “historical memory.” Mormons are pro immigration. Why? Is there a memory of what’s a cardinal event in Mormon history, that long trek to Utah? They are pro civil unions. Is that the memory of polygamy? Mormons have a rather unusual situation. Does that carry over despite the fact that the main LDS Church no longer has polygamy? And then the civil liberties question, security versus civil liberty, could that be, again, a memory of persecution? I’m just wondering whether the weight of history has some effect here.

DAVID CAMPBELL: Let me begin with the first one about how people end up in these various categories. The questions that we asked in the survey are actually much more detailed than simply are you a Methodist. So if you say, “I’m a Methodist,” we ask what flavor of Methodist, and we give them a variety of options, including the opportunity to just tell us if one of the menu choices that we have for them doesn’t fit their own Methodist denomination. They can just report that, and then we went back and read all of those and hand coded them into one category versus another. It’s messy, but I will say that we’re hardly alone in doing it this way.

On the question of historical memory, I do think there’s something to that idea. Although the memory is certainly selective, because remember that Mormons are a heavily
Republican group, and in 1856 when the Republican Party was founded, its founding document actually said that its purpose was to stamp out the twin evils of barbarism, one of which was slavery, the other of which was polygamy. There was only one group in the United States that was practicing polygamy at the time—the Mormons living in the Mountain West. 

So if there is historical memory, it would apply to perhaps the issues you mentioned, but then there would be great historical amnesia when it comes to the Republican Party because apparently Mormons have gotten over the 1856 document.

**KAREN TUMULTY,** *The Washington Post*: When I was looking at the political profile of Mormons, I was struck by how the Romney family doesn’t ever seem to have fit that profile. I mean, 1968, that election was a great inflection point for the Republican Party, and George Romney was on the sort of far left end of the party. Correct me if I’m wrong, but didn’t Lenore Romney run as a pro choice candidate for the Senate even before Roe v. Wade?

So I was wondering is there some explanation of why they would have been so far it seems like especially on the social issues outside the sort of profile, was it because they were in Michigan and not the West or what?

**DAVID CAMPBELL**: Well, I think there are different answers for George versus Mitt Romney. In 1968, I think the Mormon Church at least among its leadership was much more politically diverse than we find today. I said that one of the conditions under which Mormons can be rapidly mobilized into politics is that their leaders have to present a united front politically, and today if I’m speaking to an LDS audience, that seems like almost a truism. Well, of course, the LDS leaders are always going to stand together. That has not always been the case. There have been in the past prominent examples of LDS leaders who quite publicly disagreed with one another politically, and that was still happening in the ’60s. Probably by the ’70s and certainly the ’80s that had largely gone away.

In the case of Mitt Romney, I would actually argue that the policy positions he has taken on the social issues are somewhat consistent actually with LDS teachings. On the case of abortion, remember that this is not a group that is stridently anti-abortion. They’re willing
to accept abortion in a few limited circumstances, and on the case of gay marriage, this is a group that opposes gay marriage, but in many cases they’re okay with civil unions.

Those are both, at least on gay marriage, a fairly moderate position, and on abortion it’s moderate within the pro life camp. So I was talking about the strain of moderation that you find within the Mormon population. I think in general that is actually reflected in Mitt Romney’s positions if you think of him as being, you know, the moderate Republican versus the one that is far right.

**SALLY QUINN, The Washington Post:** You’re saying that they’re much more conservative now?

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** Yes, although I don’t know if conservative is quite the right word. In the 20th century Mormonism was always associated with conservatism in one sense or another, but it wasn’t always concentrated in the Republican Party.

**FRANKLIN FOER, The New Republic:** Are there socioeconomic splits within Mormons when it comes to their political positions? Are the people who go to kind of the more elite schools and who are more part of the global economy, do they tend to veer in a different political direction than people who are further down the economic ladder?

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** Well, in my analysis of the data, of course, it’s hard for me to speak of the one percent. I mean, there aren’t enough Mormons in our sample to be able to say anything systematically about those who come from billionaire families. But if you look in general at the Mormon population, you don’t find much of a class divide. The public perception of Mormons is, well, there’s this extremely wealthy group of Mormons in the country. It turns out that on average Mormons are not any more or less wealthy than everybody else. It is just we happen to know of a few notable examples because they’re running for President.

But when it comes to attitudes on economic issues, we actually do not find much differentiation among Mormons even along class lines. This is a group that is economically quite conservative in a small C way.
FRANKLIN FOER: When you look at the negative attitudes towards Mormons, did you disaggregate that based on other religious groups? So does that emanate in the same proportions across the board? Are Evangelicals more hostile than other groups or is the hostility spread equally?

DAVID CAMPBELL: It is not spread equally. For all the attention that is given to those groups that do not like Mormons, there actually are groups in the population that are perfectly fine with Mormons, and interestingly, Jews happen to be the group that feels the best toward Mormons relative to everyone else, but mainline Protestants and Catholics are actually pretty comfortable with them as well.

So who does that leave? Well, Evangelicals or a subset of Evangelicals have a real concern with Mormons likely over theological issues, as well as the highly secular portion of the population. Those people who say they have no religion, they’re also quite negative toward Mormons. That’s where you find the real antagonism.

TIMOTHY DALRYMPLE: I’m trying to get my head around the homogeneity index and the question of bonding. If I’m understanding it correctly, so Evangelicals were about 25. Does that mean that 25 percent of Evangelicals say that they do not have a family member, friend or neighbor of another religion?

DAVID CAMPBELL: No, actually it doesn’t. We asked people these three questions, and they get a score of how religiously homogeneous or heterogeneous their social network is. We then take that score and slice it up the way you would any sort of numerical indicator, like an SAT score. We divide people into quartiles—the top, the next, the next and then the bottom.

And what we’re reporting in that slide is just the percentage in each of those groups that falls in the top 25 percent of religious bonding. And when I say 25 percent, that’s relative to the whole population. So any one group can be above that 25 percent level if they’re above average basically. So that’s what the white line was showing you, was essentially the average, and that’s where Evangelicals are. Mormons are above that average, as are black Protestants, as are Latino Catholics.
TIMOTHY DALRYMPLE: It seems like a bit of a leap from exclusion to bonding. There’s a question of homogeneity or, you know, to what extent do you have friendships that go outside of your own religious subgroup. So I, for instance, could be very well bonded with my own religious community, and yet also have lots of friendships of people of other faiths, and I wonder would I show up then as somebody who’s not particularly bonded because I have a lot of deep relationships with people of other faiths?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Well, the way we asked the question about friends is we asked people to think of their five closest friends, and then once they’ve thought of the five closest friends, we then say, “Well, how many of those are of the same religion as you?” And they give us a number that can range from zero to five, and that’s how we measure the bonding as I’m saying among your friendships.

We asked a similar question, not exactly the same, about neighbors and extended family. We don’t ask for a number. We just say, “How many of your neighbors are of the same religion and how many in your extended family are of the same?”

PHILIP RUCKER, The Washington Post: What are the most common misperceptions or false assumptions about Mormonism in the non-Mormon public, and have those changed over the last generation since Gallup began polling in 1968? Were the beliefs about Mormons in 1968 the same as they are now?

DAVID CAMPBELL: We don’t know that much about what people were thinking of Mormons in ’68. But we do know a lot about the present and what misconceptions people have about Mormons. And the fact of the matter is polygamy is a specter that haunts the LDS Church. Whenever the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life has asked about Mormonism, they have these questions where they ask, “What’s the first thing that comes to mind when we say Mormons” (or Jews or some other group)? For “Mormon,” it turns out that polygamy is one of the most common and, in fact, I believe it is the most common response that people give when they’re asked what comes to mind.

And of course, the LDS Church ended the practice of polygamy in 1890, but there are still these offshoot groups that HBO has put on television that practice polygamy even to this day, and there’s always a lot of confusion between the LDS Church and then these fundamentalist groups that are apostates. They are not part of the official LDS community.
I would thus say that polygamy is a misconception that persists. I think another one is the question of race in the church. There’s a lot of confusion about this. The church did have a racially exclusionary policy up until 1978 whereby blacks were not permitted to hold the LDS priesthood, which might just sound like it means that blacks couldn’t be pastors. Wasn’t that the case in lots of churches?

That’s true, except remember there’s a lay clergy within Mormonism. I mentioned that earlier, and so not being able to hold the priesthood meant that blacks couldn’t be full members of the church, or at least black men couldn’t hold any positions of leadership whatsoever. All that religious volunteering I was reporting was not entirely cut off from blacks, but largely cut off because many of those positions require you to be a part of the priesthood community.

That ended in 1978, but there are still a lot of lingering misconceptions about just what exactly the contemporary LDS view is on the role of minorities within the church.

PHIL RUCKER: And do you find that these attitudes are the same across the country or are they different in a State like Nevada or Arizona or Colorado where there are more Mormons?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Since people who live in the Mountain West are more likely to know a Mormon because that’s where most Mormons are concentrated, you would get presumably fewer misperceptions in those regions of the country than you would in other parts. But it’s not the geographic thing that matters. It’s the fact that they know a Mormon.

DOYLE McMANUS, Los Angeles Times: David, you ended with the sort of front burner question: will Mitt Romney be the Al Smith or the John Kennedy of his party and of his church? One question is, are those samples big enough either in Gallup or in yours to disaggregate it by party ID to tease out other hints as to not only what might happen in a hypothetical South Carolina primary where Evangelicals would have to choose between, let’s say, a Mormon and a Catholic convert, but also in general, is that feeling more concentrated among Republican voters as among independents?
Question number two is, are there any arguments that make voters in the aggregate less hostile, more welcoming toward a Mormon candidate than they were when they started?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Let me start with the first one about reactions to a Mormon candidate broken out by party ID. It turns out that when you look at this, whether using the Gallup question or the sort of work that I’ve done, on average Republicans are actually more likely to say that they would vote for a Mormon than are Democrats.

Now, I want to be careful how we interpret that result because Gallup asks their question as a generic Mormon candidate, and that’s the same as when you’re asking about a woman or an African American or any category. However I think it’s fair to assume that a hefty proportion of those people answering the question are not answering it as a generic Mormon candidate. They’re answering it as a question about Mitt Romney. This is similar to how, in 2008, when Gallup was asking the generic question about a woman—would you vote for a woman for President?—most people answering that were undoubtedly thinking of Hillary Clinton.

So it appears that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say they’d vote for a Mormon candidate, which likely means that those Republicans are thinking of Mitt Romney. That suggests, however, that Romney’s religion is not necessarily the death knell for him in the Republican primaries. It undoubtedly will be a major obstacle in those states where you find Evangelicals of a particular stripe, those who are concerned with the fact that according to their theology Mormons are not Christians. You’re going to find those in South Carolina. You’re going to find them among Iowa caucus goers, probably not so many among just the regular electorate in Iowa, but among those folks who show up on a snowy January night to participate in the caucuses. That’s going to be an issue.

So Romney is definitely going to face questions about his religion in the Republican primaries, but then when you move outside of the primaries or at least in a few of those states it’s not clear that it’s going to be such a huge liability that it is impossible for him to win.

Your other question was about the experiment with the arguments and the counterarguments. It actually turns out that in the aggregate, when you look at everybody all together, we have yet to find a counterargument that can fully move people back to
having no concern about a Mormon candidate. But we can improve upon Mitt Romney’s chances by giving them a counterargument. Romney does a little better when people hear the counterargument than when they don’t, but it’s still not enough to completely assuage people’s concerns.

**DOYLE McMANUS:** And is there any clear difference in the effectiveness of the two different counterarguments?

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** No. So the two different counterarguments that we offered were what I’ll loosely call the Kennedy argument—it doesn’t matter what my religion is because we shouldn’t ask about a candidate’s religion—versus the Romney argument, which is, oh, yeah, I’m Mormon, but I have the same values as everybody else. We thought actually we would find differences. That’s why we asked about the two different counterarguments, but we couldn’t really find any sort of difference in how people reacted to those.

**SALLY QUINN:** When you referred a number of times to non-religious people, nothing in particular, nondenominational and atheists, is that all the same group?

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** No, they’re not. What it means is people who, when asked the question, what is your religion, answer, “Well, I’m nothing,” or nothing in particular. With the “nothing in particulars,” it is very important to note they are not the same thing as atheists. In fact, an overwhelming majority of people who say they have no religion also say they believe in God, also believe in an afterlife. They just don’t like label of an organized religion.

On average people who say they have no religion are less likely to attend religious services than those who say they do have a religion, but it’s not zero, which means that there are a number of people out there in America who are attending religious services but don’t consider themselves affiliated with that religion. In many cases they’re probably hopping from one church to another over the course of a month or year, but they don’t consider themselves affiliated with any one of them. And, again, that makes them a very different group than a hard core atheist. There obviously are atheists in America, but they’re a much smaller fraction of the population than these “nothing in particulars.”
You also asked about the nondenominational folks. If you answer the question about your religious background and report that you attended church, but it’s nondenominational, we then asked a few more questions to try to differentiate between the ecumenical and mainline Protestant kind of nondenominational versus the Evangelical mega-church kind.

**SALLY QUINN:** You’re talking about why people don’t like Mormons, but we didn’t get into the whole cult thing, which I think is sort of the issue here, and I thought it was interesting that the two groups that didn’t like Mormons most were Evangelicals and secular. A lot of people think that Mormons are crazy, and then they’re also the object of ridicule, you know, Joseph Smith and the tablets and the Angel Moroni and you know.

And you also mentioned the Broadway play, *The Book of Mormon*, which ridicules Mormons. You wouldn’t see that I don’t think about Muslims or Jews or Catholics on Broadway. I may be wrong. But clearly they are seen as an object of ridicule, and that there’s this cult thing, secrecy, and they’re weird.

And could you address that? Because I think that, you know, all of the issues that you gave about, well, the abortion and all those, those are sort of mainstream issues that affect every religion, but what we’re talking about is the real bottom line here, which is people think they’re crazy or they’re weird or they’re cultists.

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** Well, I think that the reaction to the statement that Mormons are not Christians actually taps into at least some of what you are describing. In another experiment that I didn’t report here we also said to our subjects, some people say that Mormons have strange beliefs that are different than those of Protestants and Catholics. Again, this is a true statement, and the results that we get for responses to that question are very similar to what you saw here about the charge that Mormons are not Christians.

It’s definitely true that there are some, not a majority, but some in the American population who have unease with I guess you’d say the specifics of Mormonism. But I would counter that it’s the personal connections that people make with Mormons that would cause them either to not view those issues with concern or in some cases maybe even take what might have been a matter of concern and instead view it in a positive light.
If I were to describe the religious beliefs or practices of almost any religion without any context, they would all sound strange. If I were to tell you that I work for a university that is funded by a group who eat a wafer once a week that they believe turns into the flesh of their Messiah, you would think that’s a very strange thing. I don’t think that is stranger than any of the things that are associated with Mormonism. They’re just a little older, and they’ve been around a lot more. Even if you’re not Catholic, you’ve learned a little bit about Catholicism or maybe you have a Catholic friend or acquaintance.

And that’s why I think that while in the short run all of this discussion about Mormonism is going to be painful for a lot of Mormons, many of the things that they hold sacred are, as you’ve mentioned, ridiculed. That’s happened already. It will happen again.

But I’m optimistic enough to think that in the medium run and certainly in the long run Mormons will be better off for this discussion; that if Mormons are going to be part of the mainstream, it means that they need to play in the big leagues, and playing in the big leagues means that sometimes people take shots at you.

The country will also be better off because the more we surface these issues about Mormonism and have a national conversation about them, the less stigma that will be associated with them. This is exactly the story of American Catholicism.

ANDY FERGUSON, The Weekly Standard: You had mentioned how the bonding both hurts and helps Mormons. It keeps them cohesive, but on the other hand, people have less interaction with them and misunderstand them. Is there any way to judge over time whether those bonds are loosening and whether there’s more integration into the larger society?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Well, we do have hints that this is happening. The story of the Mormon population in America has been of diffusion across the country. Over the last 50 years or so, you saw Mormons move from being almost entirely concentrated in the Mountain West to now being scattered all around the country. Now, obviously there are some parts of the country where you find more Mormons than others. Washington, D.C., happens to be an area where you’ll find a fairly high concentration. That’s also true in Boston.
So certainly the potential for greater bridging is out there because Mormons have diffused, but as I was saying in response to Paul Edwards’ earlier question, even with that geographic diffusion which has helped a little bit to foster more interfaith ties between Mormons and others, there are still many constraints within the faith itself, the very way that it’s organized that actually holds Mormons back from making more connections.

So the potential is there, but I would say based on the data that I’ve seen that it hasn’t been fully realized because the church asks a lot of its members. They do a lot of things with other members, volunteering within the walls of the church. Plus, and this goes back to the distinctiveness, most Mormons are just more comfortable to be around other Mormons. There’s a language that they speak. There are things that they do that they don’t have to keep explaining to their neighbors, and this is the hurdle that individual Mormons have to get over that, frankly, other groups have gotten over. Catholics got over this. You just have to be able to put yourself out there and let people see the way you live your life.

**ANDY FERGUSON:** But they became more integrated by becoming less Catholic, right?

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** Well, that is certainly a risk. I recently gave a lecture to an audience that was almost entirely LDS in which I was making the point that Mormons themselves need to go out and build more bridges. The most provocative question posed was, “doesn’t that mean that we would lose our distinctiveness. Isn’t that a risk? Isn’t that the story of American Catholicism and, you might argue, American Judaism as well?”

And that is a risk. I don’t, however, think that it necessarily has to be the case, and I would also say that Mormons are distinctive enough that they’re nowhere near losing that distinctiveness if they make a few more friends. So two or three generations from now maybe we need to have that conversation. I don’t think we need to now.

**MR. COFFEY:** I would be interested if you could give some of the reasons why the leadership became more conservative over the ’70s and ’80s. Was it the particular people there? It has an interesting parallel in the Vatican as well.

Secondly, as the rough and tumble of the political fray has come in, were there any particular aftereffects of the Proposition 8 back and forth, which included as I understand
it from politically active Mormon friends in Washington, some tracking or stalking or perceived stalking of Mormons who had been active in that?

And then finally, you may have seen it, the outbursts from the usually fairly calm political commentator Lawrence O’Donnell about Mormonism. Admittedly, cable news does specialize in flame throwing and it has its own rewards mostly in ratings, but do you recall his outburst based on Big Love and his work on that about what he thought the Mormon religion had at its back in terms of policy, which he thought did not do much good for Mr. Romney?

DAVID CAMPBELL: First of all, on why the LDS leadership became more conservative. I don’t know if I would say that the leadership themselves changed, at least in their religiously grounded political attitudes. What changed was American politics—with the injection of social issues, first abortion, then same sex marriage, and then all of the issues that are bundled together, including gender roles. I think it sort of seemed natural that this group that took fairly conservative positions on those issues would end up associated with the Republican Party.

My point about the political diversity among LDS leaders was not to suggest that all LDS leaders today are Republican. In fact, I have no idea about the partisanship of our current crop of leaders in the LDS Church, but if I were giving this talk in the 1960s or ’50s and going back even further, I probably could have told you something about the politics of religious leaders in the LDS Church. The general leaders were often outspoken.

But there were others also in the high levels of leadership who were known as Democrats, and that was public. That has ended. Now you don’t have any church leaders speaking out on that sort of thing. Instead they’re going to restrict themselves to just the religious stuff, but that religious stuff often has a political resonance because of our political landscape and environment. Speak out on the traditional family, you’re going to get associated with one party versus another.

On the after effects of Proposition 8, I think it is fair to say that following the Proposition 8 campaign, Mormons in California and the rest of the country felt a heightening of the besieged mentality. They felt that they were being singled out and targeted for what they saw as just simply the expression of their views in legitimate democratic discourse.
It’s certainly my own experience in talking with other members of the church that in the wake of Proposition 8 there was a feeling that they were being picked on in a way that other groups were not. Frankly, that probably comes not only from the high profile of the church’s involvement on that issue, but also because this is a cohesive group. You can sort of identify who they are.

And on Lawrence O’Donnell, I’m not sure I have anything more to say about Lawrence O’Donnell than what he has said himself, except to note that I’m willing to wager that you’re going to hear similar sorts of things again during the 2012 election cycle just as we did in 2008. Partly this is because this story is so juicy that it’s hard for folks like yourselves, the media, to not report on it.

SALLY QUINN: Can you explain the Lawrence O’Donnell thing?

MR. COFFEY: It was an unusual commentary during Romney’s first run in which Lawrence O’Donnell said, similar to the things you were discussing, that Mormonism did terrible things, discriminated against women. It has discriminated against blacks. It’s rigid and I can’t remember all the other adjectives, and it was delivered with a passion.

And it bespoke something that I think you will hear more of if Romney, in fact, takes the nomination, and it is the political buttressing or buffeting, rather, of the religion, and not similar to things I’ve seen about other religions in the political framework.

DAVID CAMPBELL: My sense is that in the latest dust-up we had about Romney’s religion from a few weeks ago now when Robert Jeffers said that Mormonism is a cult at the Value Voters Summit, my sense was that there actually were more folks either in the media itself or sort of, you know, in the chattering classes that rose to the defense of Romney or rose to the defense of Mormonism in a way that we did not see in 2008.

Now, I’ve not done a systematic analysis of this. So maybe I’m wrong, but that’s certainly my sense, and I’m seeing people nodding their heads as I say that so maybe that’s the sense elsewhere. It sure seems from my perspective in reading this stuff that there were more people willing to stand up and say, “You know, that’s outside what’s reasonable.”
MICHAEL GERSON, The Washington Post: Yes, that was exactly my impression, that each time on the right this has come up there’s been a kind of stronger reaction, and I would predict that when the criticism starts coming from the left that you’re going to have this solidarity of the besieged. I think a lot of Evangelicals have felt that way when Catholics are discriminated against. I mean, you see that kind of as a sub-current, when they are traditional rivals in American religious history.

And I think, you know, once this becomes the left against Romney, you’re not going to see much criticism from the right under those circumstances. But that’s one of the great contributions of democracy to religious pluralism. It makes strange bedfellow allies who all of a sudden are left to defend one another on issues, when they have very little theologically in common.

DR. ARD LOUIS, University of Oxford: When you looked at negative views, you unpacked that Evangelicals and atheists were more likely to have negative views of Mormons. I’m just curious, when you looked at Mormons as negative views of other religions, so that that came out differently from the national statistics and also correlated with high and low bonding scores?

The second question I have is about gender. I was interested to see that a high percentage of Mormons think that women should not have salaried jobs outside of the home, and I’m wondering, how does that correlate with volunteering activity? You expect those people have more time for things like PTAs, and this is not part of your study but something you may know about. So what is the Mormon Church’s feelings about women in other countries where women have to work for economic necessity, which is true in Latin America, Asia, and many African countries?

And my next question—what’s the kind of views of the Mormon laity on the creation/evolution debate? How do they come down on things like global warming?

And linked to that is your colleague Mark Noll, in this famous book, he wrote on The Scandal of Evangelical Mind. I’m just curious whether that resonates with you at all. Is there a scandal of the Mormon mind, or not?
And also, a subset of that is how do academics in your experience treat Mormon academics. Do you think that the academic world as a whole views someone like yourself with opening more of an academic negatively?

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** The first question you asked was about how Mormons view other groups. I’ll summarize it: Mormons love everyone else, and everyone else is not so wild about Mormons. It turns out that Mormons like people who have no religion—the Nones—more than the Nones like themselves, just as an example. But that statement is actually also true for Evangelicals who also like everyone else, and that’s interesting. What is it about Mormons and Evangelicals that might lead them to be warm toward others?

Well, one is that these are highly religious groups and just being more religious actually makes you more gregarious apparently, or more willing to be positive towards others. It’s also interesting to note that in a big study that the Pew Forum did a year ago on religious knowledge, Mormons actually scored the highest on what they knew about other religions. This is probably tied to the missionary work that they do, but knowing something about another religion probably also helps you appreciate it. So that’s what I’d say with that.

One question is about volunteering activity. Women in general volunteer more than men. Women are more religious than men. Being more religious makes you more likely to volunteer. So everything weighs in favor of religious women in general being highly engaged in volunteering, and that’s just amped up even more for Mormons because they’re just even more likely to volunteer and more likely to be religious. That feeds together to lead to a lot of involvement both in their church and in their community.

**ARD LOUIS:** The main thing I’m interested in is whether that correlated to the fact that they are less likely to take salaried jobs.

**DAVID CAMPBELL:** Not necessarily. It’s more how religious you are. So the world would be a simpler place to understand if it was a zero sum relationship. If you don’t have a job, you’re more likely to volunteer and vice versa, but that turns out not to be the case. The women who work are actually just as likely to volunteer as women who don’t.
And then you asked about the LDS Church and its attitudes towards women working in other countries. Just to be clear, what I showed you was data on how the Mormon rank and file feel about gender roles. That is a little different than what the official policy or teaching might be of the LDS Church. While the church itself continues to hold to a traditionalist view of the family, having famously opposed the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s, that doesn’t actually mean that the church has any official prohibition on women working outside of the home.

Over the last ten to 15 years, you’ve seen a real softening of the language that’s used from LDS Church leaders about women working outside the home simply because increasingly Mormon women are working outside of the home. At the individual level Mormons are probably working this out for themselves, trying to think through the appropriate role for mothers working and such. But officially from the church it’s perfectly fine for women to work outside of the home. Whether they choose to do so is a different matter, whether they’re in the United States or elsewhere.

On the question of creation versus evolution among Mormon laity, Mormons are about as likely as Evangelicals to endorse creationism over the theory of evolution. The reason why that’s a bit of a surprise is, theologically, there’s no reason why Mormons would have to endorse creationism. Their own theology actually doesn’t preclude the possibility that life was created through an evolutionary process. I mean, God was in control of it, but there’s nothing in Mormon teaching that would say it had to have happened in six literal days, but nonetheless, you do find Mormons being more likely to endorse creationism over evolution.

You asked about the fact that I’m a Mormon academic and whether I ever face any hostility about that. I can honestly say that in my career I have only once encountered any sort of overt hostility in a conversation over the fact that I was Mormon and it was many years ago when I was in grad school. In my experience at least among political scientists, and this is probably true of social scientists in general, there’s an acceptance as long as you stick to the facts and the evidence. I have never really encountered any real concern. Now, what they say about me behind my back I don’t know, but certainly to my face, I’ve not had any real concern.
PETER DAVID, The Economist: Were you meaning to imply that, you know, we can expect some sort of conflagration [of political mobilization]? What would it take to set fire to the dry kindling and what are the limits to the sort of political activity and mobilization you might expect to see from Mormons?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Well, if it were to be directed from church leaders themselves, so that’s quite apart from individual Mormons deciding that they want to rally on behalf of Mitt Romney or some other candidate. That will would go on, but I can assure you that would not come with the imprimatur of the LDS leadership.

But when the LDS leadership does decide to get involved, the language that they always use is that they only take positions on moral issues, not political issues, but I think we can all appreciate that the line is often blurry between those, but nonetheless, that is the officially stated policy.

Based on the historical record, I would say that there are a handful of issues that the church seems to care about most. Currently that would be the definition of the family, although even there the church is somewhat selective where it chooses to get involved. I don’t claim to know exactly why they choose to get involved in some campaigns and not others, but I suspect that it has something to do with where they think they might make a difference.

Over the last 30 or 40 years, another issue that doesn’t get nearly as much attention and where the church has actually been quite consistent and vocal, has been gambling. The church has opposed legalized gambling in many different forums both in Utah and in other states as well, and if you go way back to the 1960s, the church was also involved in alcohol policy in the State of Utah in a rather famous ballot initiative in the State of Utah over whether Utahans would be able to buy liquor by the drink.

That’s a pretty small set of issues. There might be others that would come down the pike, but I wouldn’t expect it to be, you know, a huge number.

FRANKLIN FOER: So you mentioned that there are very few sermons that are actually about politics, and here you’re saying that there’s this reluctance from the church to get too deeply involved in politics. Could you just talk about the roots and contours? Is there
an anti-politics? Is there a sense that politics is like a dirty realm or is there any hostility to the practice of politics per se?

DAVID CAMPBELL: No. As I showed you, Mormons are as likely to be involved in politics as everyone else, and Mormons themselves are encouraged to be involved in the political process. There’s actually a letter read every election year over every pulpit in every congregation that comes from the First Presidency. (That is, the President of the Church and his two counselors. Think of them as being like vice presidents). This is like a papal encyclical. It’s read over every pulpit, and it says you are all encouraged to get involved in the political process, but the church will take no political stands.

So I wouldn’t say that Mormons think of politics as being a dirty realm, but LDS leaders are very careful to protect the Church as an institution. The church leaders see a great risk in the Church, with a capital C, being viewed as political in any way, shape or form, and that probably does have historical roots. There’s not any reluctance for church leaders to encourage individual Mormons to be involved in politics, but they’re very, very careful about how the church itself is perceived because they’re in the business of trying to win souls to the Mormon Church, and they don’t necessarily see politics as a good way to accomplish that.

DAVID MARK, Politico: Professional secularists—like Bill Maher, Christopher Hitchens—seem to give the LDS Church a particularly hard time. Maybe they go after the Catholic Church with some comparable level of furor, but it’s certainly among their top targets. Is there a sense that this has hurt and kind of sunk in the popular culture, or has it in a sense kind of created a certain sympathy, a backlash, creating more interest in finding out about the church?

DAVID CAMPBELL: My suspicion would be that, again, in the short run these sorts of attacks are undoubtedly painful for Mormons themselves, but I’m not actually convinced that they do that much damage in the bigger picture of how Mormons are perceived by everyone else.

That’s true for episodes of South Park that highlight the church, the musical on Broadway or the screeds levelled by Bill Maher or Christopher Hitchens or anyone else. And the reason that I say that is it establishes Mormons as a group worth taking seriously. Nobody would poke fun at Mormons if they didn’t matter. My own personal opinion is the more
this sort of thing happens and the more Mormons are out there, the more the Mormons are going to be seen as part of the mainstream. And if they’re in the mainstream, it means you can poke fun at them. Now, sometimes that is going to step over some lines, but in other cases, you know, maybe Mormons should lighten up a little bit and be willing to roll with it.

ALLISON POND, Deseret News: One of the things you talk about in American Grace is how Catholics who become less active will still self-identify as Catholics, although Protestants, if they become less active, may be more likely to then say, “Oh, I’m nothing in particular.” And it seems to me that Mormons are more like the Protestants in that regard, and you know, if they are less active, that they’re more likely to not self-identify. And so I’m wondering what you think about polling on Mormons, and as throughout the election more polling of Mormons comes out, to what extent should it be taken with a grain of salt, or is it actually more instructive to look at this data based on Mormons who are the most active and the most involved?

And, religion has sort of transitioned from pushing for more equality to aligning more with conservative causes. Where are Mormons in all of this in terms of your data?

DAVID CAMPBELL: The first question was about Mormons identifying themselves as Mormons and the fact that we’re probably missing some people who maybe in the past have been Mormon or members of the LDS Church but do not currently think of themselves that way. I actually think that for the purposes of analysis, that makes for a cleaner analysis, that we’re really getting at people who go around thinking of themselves as Mormons. Now, it doesn’t mean that all of them are necessarily active in the faith. There’s a fair portion of the Mormon population who are perfectly willing to identify as Mormon but are not necessarily heavily involved. It’s just that it seems that they’re more likely to be heavily involved than are nominal members of other faiths. We also know that retention rates among Mormons, by which we mean people who were raised LDS, are higher than among other groups, but not fantastically higher.

Mormons as a group are quite economically conservative. So when it comes to questions of redistribution of wealth and such, they line up as you would expect very conservative Republicans to do. We do not see a great concern for income inequality among the
Mormon population, at least not as of yet. Maybe that would change if we saw a different rhetoric coming from the pulpit, but that’s the status quo.

PAUL EDWARDS: Do we see differences in political attitudes among Mormons that are educated?

DAVID CAMPBELL: It does appear that education, on the one hand, does correlate with more moderation on many of the issues that we’re highlighting. On the immigration question that could very well be because if you served a full-time mission for the LDS Church, chances are you’re going to be more active in the faith later on in life. We know there’s a correlation there, and that would fit my hypothesis that the attitudes on immigration are driven at least in part by the missionary experience or, if not you personally having served a mission in a Latin American country, knowing somebody who did and being exposed to that culture.

CARL CANNON, RealClearPolitics.com: A 2003 South Park episode ridiculed Joseph Smith, but it ridiculed anti-Mormon bigotry even more. It sort of stuck up for Mormons as a people. Do you know the reaction to that show within the church?

DAVID CAMPBELL: After all the ridicule that this one Mormon kid in South Park receives, he says to one of his buddies, “You know, I don’t really care what people say and I don’t really know about all this history stuff. All I know is that my religion teaches me to love my family and be a good person,” or something along those lines. I take that as a positive statement, that in the end that story was, well, Mormons might believe a bunch of weird stuff, but they’re good people. And that’s kind of what I think Mormons themselves would want the world to recognize, that, yes, we’re distinctive. We believe different things. We aren’t mainline Protestants. We don’t believe the same things. That’s what makes us different and distinctive. But we believe that those things lead us to do good things.

CARL CANNON: But what was the reaction of the elders?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Well, I can’t speak for church leaders. I have no idea what their reaction is. Among rank and file Mormons, my experience is that some people are concerned whenever there’s anything that they perceive as even remotely negative in the
press about the church. That’s probably no different than other groups as well, and those folks are going to be hostile to that.

One crowd is not going to like it at all, but there’s another that I would like to think of as maybe a little more media savvy and maybe a little more likely to have made bridges to people of other faiths who recognize that this is what it means to be part of the mainstream. You’re going to have your faith out there, and hopefully in the end the balance is more positive than negative.

FRED BARNES, The Weekly Standard: David, how do Mormons feel about lapsed Mormons? Since they like everybody, do they like lapsed Mormons just as well?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Well, we didn’t ask that specifically, but just speaking from my own experience, yes. Within Mormonism you’ll often hear people refer to active versus inactive Mormons, and an inactive Mormon would be a lapsed Mormon. They’re always spoken of in terms of being inactive or less active. In other words, they’re still part of the team. They’re still part of the tribe, and we just need to go out and bring them back in and love them back into the church. That is actually a huge effort on the part of any local LDS congregation. There’s a lot of attention paid to insuring that those who are on the rolls of the church but not attending are still invited back and welcomed back. So it’s a group that works very hard to make sure that its own members are darkening the doors of the church. And in my experience, I don’t think there’s any particular animosity to those who have lapsed. That would be different, however, for someone who actually repudiated or turned away in sort of an active, overt way from the faith. I think that would be viewed with great concern or maybe even antagonism.

FRED BARNES: The hostility to Mormons among Evangelical Christians and people who are secular, how much effect might that have on the 2012 presidential race, assuming that Mitt Romney is the nominee?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Objections from Evangelicals will matter in the primaries but not so much in the general election. Objections from seculars are probably not going to matter at all because those folks are not going to vote for a Republican.
There are some caveats to that. If there’s not enthusiasm among the Republican base for the Republican nominee, that can hurt your candidate. John McCain can tell you all about that. Chances are you’re not going to see the same sort of wellspring of enthusiasm for Romney as you did for George W. Bush, and that could definitely hurt him in a general election.

TIMOTHY DALRYMPLE: David, do you have data on the extent to which Evangelicals or other religious groups actually have an accurate understanding of Mormonism or beliefs that Evangelicals might have about Mormonism that are common amongst Evangelicals and yet wrong? Is there information kind of just on how Mormons are perceived by religious groups in ways that might depart from reality?

DAVID CAMPBELL: Well, we’ve done a little of this where we’ve asked people factual questions about Mormons. Do Mormons believe this? Do Mormons believe that? My recollection is that Evangelicals actually did know a fair amount about Mormon beliefs and so they were a group for which more information wasn’t necessarily helping.

MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Well, ladies and gentlemen, you can tell the success of our first seminar when we are going over time. Join me in thanking Professor Campbell for a wonderful presentation.