

A Mormon for President?

With Mormon candidates such as former congressman John Huntsman and former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney considering 2012 runs for president, evangelicals are beginning to discuss the implications of a Mormon president. In a controversial column at the Patheos website, author Warren Cole Smith argued that “a vote for Romney is a vote for the LDS Church.”

Smith admitted that evangelicals will be attracted to a Mormon candidate’s shared views on social and moral issues, but argued that they shouldn’t overlook the fact that Mormons have a different religious worldview than evangelicals, and that worldview shapes their behavior. He pointed to Mormons’ various positions, from polygamy to racial discrimination, that have been reversed in light of “continuing revelation” that comes through the church’s prophets.

“Even if a Mormon social teaching happens to concur with orthodox Christianity at this point in time, it is unreliable and subject to alteration,” Smith notes. “It’s tempting to say that ‘continuing revelation’ has defined Romney’s career, who has changed his positions on same-sex marriage and abortion and just about every major ‘culture war’ issue.”

’s editor, Jeremy Lott, begs to differ with this position and points to self-described Christian candidates who hold to political positions that are at odds with evangelicalism. He suggests that those who would oppose a Mormon candidate are allowing sectarianism to color their political views.

“There may indeed be good grounds to oppose a Mormon candidate for office. Yet they ought to be the same grounds that you would use to oppose someone from your own religious tradition,” he noted. “Random traditional Christian voter X should not vote for Mormon candidate Y for the same reason

that he would not for a Catholic, Protestant or Jewish candidate—because you disagree with the candidate about political matters of great import.”