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Are Mormons in the Mainstream? — New “On Faith” Article

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The question for this week at “[On Faith](#),” the joint project of *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek* magazine, is this: *After 175 years of existence, is Mormonism entering the mainstream of American religious life or are people still suspicious of it?*

As I responded in [my article](#), there is more than one question there. One set of questions surrounds Mormonism itself. The second has to do with the notion of the “mainstream.”

In my article, I deal with both sets of questions. Judged theologically, Mormonism is far outside the boundaries of orthodox Christianity. The movement has borrowed Christian themes and texts, but it is by no means a representation of biblical Christianity.

That said, Mormonism has been rather stunningly successful at moving into the mainstream of American life. The real problem with this question is the definition of “mainstream” in a culture undergoing such transformation.

As I argue:

Both evangelical Christians and Mormons have, to some extent, worked hard to enter that mainstream. To a considerable extent, both certainly hope to remain there. Yet, I wonder about the prospects for that. As “mainstream” America moves in any number of directions, and as our current cultural shifts take shape, both evangelical Christians and Mormons may find themselves outside the mainstream once again. Issues including family life, sexuality, the definition of marriage, and any number of social, cultural, and moral controversies may drive both groups out of their cultural comfort zones — and fast.

The challenges of modernity confront both groups. How long will this “mainstream” remain the mainstream? Time will tell.

The entire article is available [here](#).

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