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Marriage and Family: Gospel Insights Stephen R. Covey and Truman G. Madsen

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STEPHEN R. COVEY and TRUMAN G. MADSEN. *Marriage and Family: Gospel Insights*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1983. 241 pp. \$8.95.

Reviewed by Carlfred Broderick, clinical director, Broderick and Wood Marriage and Family Counseling, Inc., Cypress, California.

Though published as a single volume, this is really two books. The first consists of fourteen chapters by Madsen (subtitled "for philosophical"), and the second consists of fifteen chapters by Covey (subtitled "for practical"). Actually, as might be imagined, there is much of both philosophical and practical value in each half. In fact, any couple that comes away from reading this book without gaining anything of importance should be ashamed of themselves.

Speaking for myself, I found the first book easier to read. Truman Madsen sings to my spirit. His intellect flirts and soars and tickles. I love the richly instructive quotes he has gleaned from the writings of Church leaders, and I love his own vivid eloquence.

Stephen Covey's solid contribution suffers by comparison, probably, I think, from his having drawn the short straw. I enjoy him most when he, too, is trilling in a philosophical register. In this duet, however (if I may be indulged in continuing the metaphor), his assignment is the equally necessary but less melodic bass part—the practical rules of successful family management. A major portion of his text consists of a serious-minded consideration of the principles of successful organization. These are presented in the form of lists interspersed with multi-arrowed diagrams. I liked best the anecdotal illustrations drawn from his own family experiences. Even these, however, like the lists they are intended to illuminate, seem to have lost some of their freshness, having become overpolished from much retelling. (This is, alas, the bane of all circuit-riding educators, the present reviewer not excepted.)

Despite these stylistic caveats, I enjoyed the book. The material it covers is important, and the treatment given the material is helpful. In

many cases I felt motivated to do better in my own family relationships. If we followed these precepts—a mixture of gospel principles and business management guidelines—I am confident that we would prosper, both as aspiring celestial families and as basic managerial units. That is a lot for one book to accomplish.