Brief Notices

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Few subjects offer more opportunities for missteps by Christian-oriented professionals than discussions of male and female homosexuality. It is a credit to the integrity and the ability of those who produced this special issue of the journal of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists that they avoided such missteps. One misstep would have been to produce a parochial apology for LDS views. The second most tempting misstep would have been to give undue space to the politically driven views of homophilic clinicians. Instead they have brought under one cover useful articles about the ongoing biological debate, secular clinical approaches that apply to Latter-day Saint clients, historical perspectives on policies of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and insights from people who personally have struggled with homosexual thoughts and behaviors.

This volume is a necessary tool for any responsible student of the subject, any competent therapist, and perhaps most usefully, for those who have experienced homosexual emotions.

The effectiveness of this edition underscores a larger need, however. Those who insist on using the term "homosexual" as defining a complete human being and "homosexuality" as a functional culture betray the hopes of so-called homosexuals who would reorient themselves to a full range of life-giving emotions and relationships. Homosexuality no more defines the complete person than does heterosexuality!

One anticipates the day when LDS social scientists address the far larger subject of *human* sexuality and its encompassing ramifications.

—Victor Brown Jr.

*Rocky Mountain Divide: Selling and Saving the West*, by John B. Wright (University of Texas Press, 1993)

John B. Wright's *Rocky Mountain Divide: Selling and Saving the West* contains a unique examination of Mormon attitudes toward land conservation. In spite of inaccurate statements about Mormon history, doctrine, and practice, the book is a valuable resource on land conservation in the West and a careful examination of the present status of conservation efforts in Utah and Colorado.

Wright's book is intended to be a call to arms for voluntary land conservation through land trusts—"private, nonprofit citizen groups which engage in land protection activities" (14). The mission of the
land trust is to conserve private lands of significant natural, scenic, and historic value. Most land trusts receive tax-exempt status from the U.S. Treasury Department’s Internal Revenue Service. At the time Wright’s book was written, Utah had only one land trust while Colorado had twenty-seven (14).

Wright seizes upon the dramatic contrast in land trusting in Colorado and Utah and recounts, as a historical geographer, the evolution of land use and land conservation in the two states. As one would expect, Wright finds Utah’s Mormon heritage its most significant distinction. Recounting the initial settlement efforts of Utah, Wright notes the reverential attitude of the early pioneers toward their new territory: “Over and over in their diaries, pioneers noted streams, flood-plains, excellent soils, tall grass, and a dry climate tempered by cooling canyon winds” (162). He also finds that early Mormon statements on land use were very high-minded.

But the book also contrasts the Saints’ early idealism with the reality of their monopolization, deforestation, and overgrazing and recounts the land and water exploitation that has now filled the Salt Lake Valley with development. Wright contends that Utahns conserve only incidentally, not as a matter of focus. He blames the Mormon belief in millennialism for Utahns’ attitude toward their lands. If “earth will appear as the Garden of Eden” and “be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory” (A of F 10), there is little reason to pay attention to the state of the land now.

Wright is also disturbed that little has been done by the Church in land conservation leadership. He suggests that the LDS Church sponsor a Mormon Trail land trust and a Sanpete County cultural park to simultaneously exemplify Mormon values and land conservation (242; see also 246, 255).

Wright’s book represents an important opportunity for self-examination as Utah finds itself with one of the highest growth rates of any state in the nation. The unfortunate factual errors and use of controversial sources will impair Wright’s ability to reach the general Mormon audience he needs to persuade. Nevertheless, the book’s overview of land conservation efforts in Utah and Colorado makes it a valuable resource.

—David Nuffer


For the earliest pioneers making the overland journey to the west coast, Utah was a problem that most chose to go around. By providing excerpts from early explorers’ journals and reports, West
from Fort Bridger documents the pioneering of emigrant trails (1846–50) that did cross Utah. The editors include notes and commentary to clarify the journal entries.

West from Fort Bridger, first published in 1951, has a tangled genealogy. In 1941, Dale Morgan started an eight-year correspondence with J. Roderic Korns, a Salt Lake businessman, and Charles Kelly, an amateur explorer who rediscovered the Salt Desert trails in the 1920s. The three men performed the research at the heart of the book and argued out facts, theories, discoveries, and problems through “hundreds of pages of letters” (ix). When Korns died in July 1949, Dale Morgan compiled and published the book in the name of his friend. It was an instant success but was published in a very limited edition, and it has always been difficult to find.

Working from extensive notes left by Morgan, who died in 1971, the current editors have clarified and expanded the work. One of the stated purposes of the new edition is to update the geographical descriptions to reflect modern highway routes and names. Nevertheless, the maps (or lack of maps) accompanying the volume are perhaps its greatest weakness.

The book offers a thorough discussion of the route south of the Great Salt Lake, the “Hastings Cutoff.” Perhaps in his desire to promote the road which carried his name, Hastings consistently misrepresented the length of the waterless crossing of the “Salt Plain,” resulting in losses of animals for most of the early travelers. For the Donner Party, the losses were disastrous (55).

West from Fort Bridger is a companion to Peter DeLafosse’s Trailing the Pioneers, which attempts to correlate the old trails with modern roads and highways. The book, which describes itself as a “series of automobile tours . . . intended for the general tourist traveling in an ordinary passenger car” (1), includes five trail tours, each written by a different author: the Spanish Trail from Monticello to St. George; the Bidwell-Bartleson Trail from Soda Springs, Idaho, to Wendover, Nevada; the Pioneer Trail from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake City; the Hastings Cutoff from Salt Lake City to Wendover; and the Salt Lake Cutoff from Salt Lake City to City of Rocks, Idaho.

Using Trailing the Pioneers as my guide, I recently took a visitor from England on a circumnavigation of the Great Salt Lake. We followed the Hastings Cutoff tour to Wendover. Then we backtracked the Bidwell-Bartleson Trail and Hensley’s Salt Lake Cutoff to Salt Lake City. The tours are not set up well for backtracking, and we frequently felt like the pioneers, looking at our vague, nearly featureless maps and scratching our heads in dismay.

This, however, was a minor problem, and we made it back to Salt Lake City having gained an appreciation for this handy little guidebook and for the pioneers we trailed across Utah’s rugged terrain.

—Fred C. Pinnegar
Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organization from an Orderly Universe, by Margaret J. Wheatley (Berrett-Koehler, 1992)

Margaret Wheatley states that she is “at heart a lapsed scientist, still hoping that the world will yield up its secrets to [her] in predictable formulation” (6). Having harvested a number of secrets from recent popularizations of science, Wheatley applies these secrets as insights into her own field of organizational leadership. The result is an unabashed, almost euphoric, affirmation of quantum physics, self-organizing systems, chaos theory, and the philosophical lessons that are routinely drawn from those disciplines.

Most books can be experienced at more than one level of understanding; this book works best at the celebrational level. Although Wheatley deals with some abstruse concepts, she is not overly cerebral, and her larger message attempts to liberate us from outmoded ways of thinking. She postulates that the new science, in all its ideological upheaval, sends a clear signal to managers and organizational specialists: because attitudes shape organizations, no better way exists to achieve organizational reform than persuading people that their personal attitudes are not sacrosanct. Some may find this a frightening prospect, but, on the other hand, loss of rigidity can also be cause for exultation.

Wheatley ends her book by discussing chaos theory, a move that allows her to wrap things up with the assertion that while the universe is strange, uncertain, and bizarre, it remains “a universe of inherent order” (151)—a point that must be made if Wheatley is to establish her claim that we can learn about organization from an orderly universe.

—David Grandy


Now that Gospel Doctrine teachers are provided only a set of questions and a quotation for each lesson, many are on the lookout for additional resources. Other Church members are seeking new insights and “a wider appreciation of the life and ministry of the Savior” (ix). This relatively slim volume aims to provide such an appreciation via a discussion of many, but not all, of the episodes reported in the Gospels and Acts. Matthews draws primarily upon the Latter-day Saint cannon, the teachings of Joseph Smith, and, of course, his own observations.

The book is organized thematically instead of chronologically. But the reader can find specific discussions through the scripture index and a fairly detailed index. One valuable chapter is a collection of quotations from the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning Jesus.

The contributions or lack thereof of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST) are usually highlighted rather than those from the
Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. Such an emphasis is no surprise coming from a man who has devoted much of his life to studying the JST. However, since the current LDS edition of the Bible includes most of the significant changes in the JST, this emphasis is not as useful as another might be.

As is usual in commentaries, the discussions vary in depth and freshness. Nevertheless, the general reader will find many passages that are both instructive and inspiring.

—Doris R. Dant


Readers familiar with Elder John K. Carmack's levelheaded and common-sense approach to explaining gospel principles will not be disappointed with his thoughts on tolerance. Written in light of his experiences as a Church leader in California and Asia, this book is a plea for broader understanding and practice of tolerance in its Christian context. Experience has convinced Elder Carmack of the increased need for tolerance in our encounters with people of diverse backgrounds. To grant the timeliness of the message, one need only consider recent outbreaks of violence across the world as previously segregated religious and ethnic groups rekindle prejudice and hatred.

The strength of this book lies in its straightforward approach, although its rhetoric and style are sometimes unpolished. Laying a scriptural and prophetic foundation, this work presents tolerance as a virtue taught and practiced by the Savior, our exemplar in matters of tolerance. Elder Carmack wisely counsels that, in order for tolerance to become an antidote for the poison of worldwide hatred and strife, individuals must adopt attitudes and practices appropriate to the Savior's teachings. The book then offers advice about how principles of tolerance may be applied in family, church, and public life.

But tolerance is not a principle without limits. It does not signify indiscriminate, and therefore meaningless, respect for all actions and ideas. Elder Carmack offers strong counsel on the limits of tolerance as he discusses a variety of public issues, especially free speech and pornography. His reasoning, influenced by his legal training, recognizes the liberality of the principle while at the same time improving our understanding of the general relation between moral and ethical standards and public behavior. Also of timely interest is his counsel regarding the role of tolerance in the Church. He offers clear explanations of the place of Church discipline in regard to tolerating diversity of belief within the Church. _Tolerance_ is an overdue and necessary addition, by a committed LDS leader, to our overall understanding and practice of the gospel.

—Neal W. Kramer