



7-1-2007

Book Notices

Doris R. Dant

Carl Cranny

Steven C. Harper

J. Michael Hunter

John M. Murphy

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>



Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dant, Doris R.; Cranny, Carl; Harper, Steven C.; Hunter, J. Michael; Murphy, John M.; Speirs, Saul A.; and Hurlbut, Jennifer (2007) "Book Notices," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 46 : Iss. 3 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol46/iss3/15>

This Notice is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Book Notices

Authors

Doris R. Dant, Carl Cranny, Steven C. Harper, J. Michael Hunter, John M. Murphy, Saul A. Speirs, and Jennifer Hurlbut

The Family in the New Millennium: World Voices Supporting the "Natural" Clan, 3 vols., edited by A. Scott Lovelless and Thomas B. Holman (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2007). Vol. 1, *The Place of Family in Human Society*; vol. 2, *Marriage and Human Dignity*; vol. 3, *Strengthening the Family*.

The 2004 Doha International Conference for the Family yielded this collection of papers presented at venues around the world. If for no other reason, these volumes are valuable as proof that the family is a concern that unifies nations regardless of politics, religion, culture, and economic standing. And that proof gives hope to those of us who might otherwise despair at the rapid onslaught of antifamily forces.

The preface by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, Consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs of Qatar, establishes some of this collection's basic themes. First, the family, as a school, plays an irreplaceable part in safeguarding "social stability and security" (1:ix). It is therefore critical that the family be recognized "as part of the solution rather than part of the problem" (1:x). For example, the family can prepare people who can dialog respectfully and rationally to forestall social disintegration and establish peace. Her Highness challenges the global society to cooperate in researching and adopting "references and standards that will safeguard the rights of the family and ensure its integration as an effective and constructive factor in all national, regional, and international development programs" (1.x).

This is high-minded rhetoric; however, it stems not from naïve optimism but from the urgency expressed in almost every article—that the natural

family must be actively safeguarded. To that end, the global community is called upon to create policies and practices that will buttress and enhance the family.

Based on some of "the finest available scholarship" (1:xiii), these papers detail the many trends weakening the family, from aging populations to family-punitive taxes to the below-replacement fertility rates of sixty-one countries. But the research does not stop there. The causal factors for these trends are explored, as are—and this is even more eye-opening—the ways these trends interact.

Where other books present only the problems (often in less depth), these volumes also present solutions and showcase countries that recognize the crisis and are establishing policies to counter threats to the family. It is heartening to learn that Latvians, for example, faced "the grim realities" of their "demographic catastrophe" (3:341–42). They have developed a sixty-step plan to increase the chances of family survival, including special tax incentives, housing credits, changes in the adoption policies, aid to dysfunctional families, and various subsidies.

Although scholarly, the papers are readable and interesting. They are organized so that each complements the papers around it, yet a person can dip in anywhere for an enlightening read.

—Doris R. Dant

A Twenty-Something's Guide to Spirituality: Questions You Hesitate to Ask, Answers You Rarely Hear, compiled by Jacob Werrett and David Read (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007)

A Twenty-Something's Guide to Spirituality is a collection of ten essays by various Latter-day Saint authors

ranging from the late Elder Neal A. Maxwell to Truman G. Madsen, emeritus professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University. The subtitle, “Questions You Hesitate to Ask, Answers You Rarely Hear,” is a bit of a misnomer. The questions are actually asked over and over again by many adults in their twenties. Each chapter begins with a question, posed by a twenty-something Latter-day Saint, which raises issues that are then discussed for a few pages. The responses were selected and edited by two LDS law students, Jacob Werrett and David Read.

The book reads like a friendly dialogue—one could picture a group of people sitting around for lunch and discussing such topics. The questions are genuine and sincere, and the authors give sound and sage advice. The topics range from women in education to maintaining activity in the Church, and all are about important issues facing young adults in the Church today. Because of the question-and-answer format, it is easy to find an essay that will address a particular issue—a quick perusal of the question (no more than a page or two) yields the essence of the issue.

This book is ideally suited to young single adults or those who work closely with them. To anyone who is embarking on his or her college years, has a child who is doing so, or is in a young single adult bishopric, the essays and talks in this book will be valuable. As an example, in response to the question of how to choose between two good options, Virginia H. Pearce mentions Doctrine and Covenants 111, the Lord’s response to Joseph’s trip to Salem to find hidden treasure, as an example of how God can turn our bad (or even just not so good) choices into marvelous results. James Jardine talks about honesty in today’s competitive world, using

examples from his own life and from the character Sir Thomas More in the play *A Man for All Seasons*. Truman G. Madsen gives nine reasons to learn how to learn—not just going to school but actually understanding how to grapple with issues and continue learning as a lifelong pursuit. The answers to such questions will be a great aid to young adults and those around them.

—Carl Cranny

Critical Issues in American Religious History: A Reader, edited by Robert R. Mathisen, 2d rev. ed. (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006)

In eight hundred pages filled with sixteen generally chronological chapters, each including several historical documents and various essays written by recognized authorities, this volume ambitiously attempts to comprehensively cover critical issues in American religious history from its colonization to 1980. But even such coverage is necessarily selective. From my LDS perspective, I noticed right away that chapter 5, on American religion in the early republic, is silent on the subject of early Mormonism. The essays in chapter 5 cover millennialism, Charles Finney, and Adventism. Each of these rich topics is deserving of its place, and each could be profitably compared with Joseph Smith and early Mormonism.

I hoped Mathisen would have let Joseph Smith speak for himself by featuring his brief 1832 history. Instead, Mormonism first appears in chapter 6, where Brigham Young’s 1845 statement announcing the exodus from Illinois is featured. Is not the Brigham Young document insignificant by comparison? Mormonism disappears again until the final chapter, where a slice of Sonia Johnson’s 1979 autobiography is featured. This feature of an obviously

divisive personality reminds me of a graduate school seminar in which one of my fellow students, a non-Mormon, compared Johnson's autobiography to her papers and found considerable dissonance between the two. The autobiography is a much sexier, embellished story. Why does Johnson's document get privileged?

It is a good thing that the Joseph Smith Papers are being prepared for publication. With increasingly high-profile Latter-day Saints in politics, national polls and publications are suggesting deep-seated fears and prejudices against Mormonism. All of this should compel us to consider one of the most critical issues in American religious history: the nature of revealed religion in a democracy (or the nature of democracy for believers in revealed religion). Those who want to know for themselves about these critical issues in American religious history will need alternative sources for their inquiry than this book.

—Steven C. Harper

Nineteenth-Century Saints at War, edited by Robert C. Freeman (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006)

Robert C. Freeman, director of the Saints at War project at Brigham Young University, and colleague Dennis A. Wright have published two previous volumes that focus on the experiences of Latter-day Saints during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. This present publication focuses on the nineteenth-century wartime experiences of Latter-day Saints.

Nineteenth-Century Saints at War is a collaborative effort involving several scholars. Andrew C. Skinner provides an excellent analysis of Latter-day Saint

doctrines and principles as they pertain to war and peace. Larry C. Porter discusses Latter-day Saint involvement in the Mexican-American War. Lieutenant Colonel Sherman L. Fleek (United States Army, retired) provides an overview of the causes and the impact of the Utah War. David F. Boone writes about the Civil War, including Joseph Smith's prophecy of that war. James I. Mangum gives an interesting account of Latter-day Saints in the Spanish-American and Philippine Wars.

The editor provides a brief introduction to each war and also entertaining sidebars, which highlight significant individuals and places associated with each war. For example, one fascinating sidebar focuses on Charles Henry Wilcken, a former member of the Prussian Army who arrived in the United States in 1857 and joined Johnston's Army. Captured by Lot Smith's cavalry in Wyoming, Wilcken eventually joined the Church and went on to serve as a bodyguard for two Church presidents (89).

Notes at the end of each chapter will lead the interested reader to further reading. The book is well illustrated with over forty photographs and paintings. Many readers will likely be unfamiliar with the interesting artwork, which comes from both museums and private collections.

This work provides a good overview of the nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint wartime experience in one convenient volume. It succeeds in placing the Church experience against the broader American experience as it relates to war.

—J. Michael Hunter

Nauvoo: Mormon City on the Mississippi River, by Raymond Bial (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Although only forty-four pages, Raymond Bial's well-written children's history *Nauvoo: Mormon City on the Mississippi River* is much more than a history of Nauvoo. Bial, who is also an accomplished photographer, has illustrated the book with his own lavish photographs that capture the essence of "the city beautiful" and its surroundings.

Bial does not limit his history to a discussion of Nauvoo; in a few short pages, he addresses the broader sweep of early LDS history, including the First Vision, the founding of the Church, the subsequent development of the Church in Kirtland, the Missouri persecutions and the expulsion of the Saints, and the early settlement of Nauvoo. Bial's summary of the Book of Mormon narrative is particularly well done, as is his discussion of Church teachings and doctrines. Apart from a few minor errors, his history is accurate, and he relates the events leading to the settlement of Nauvoo in a compelling manner.

Following the persecution of the Saints in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph, as quoted by Bial, wanted nothing more than to "find a resting place for a little season at least" (19); and this, the author suggests, they found in Nauvoo. Anxious to accommodate the Missouri refugees as well as new converts from the British Isles, Joseph Smith acquired "large parcels of land" (20) and had the marshy swamps or "flats" drained. The city grew quickly, and by 1844 Nauvoo had become one of the largest communities in Illinois.

The author characterizes Nauvoo as "a small kingdom tucked in the western corner of the state" of Illinois (24).

Most homes were built of logs; approximately two hundred structures, however, were built of the characteristic red brick. Particularly interesting is Bial's discussion of Nauvoo's artisans and craftsmen whose shops are the subject of many of his photographs. He captures the thriving nature of Nauvoo and its citizens, mentioning such people as Jonathan Browning, who "invented one of the earliest repeating rifles" (23), and whose gunsmith shop was located on the city's Main Street. Bial's discussion of the Relief Society organization in the Prophet Joseph's Red Brick Store, the Pendleton Log School on Kimball Street, and the Seventies Hall that housed the Nauvoo library contribute to a complete portrait of community life in the Latter-day Saint city.

As suggested by Bial, the most "ambitious undertaking" for the Saints in Nauvoo was the construction of the temple. Bial relates the history of the temple's construction as well as its subsequent destruction by fire and tornado. The author also recounts, in poignant detail, the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the persecution of the Saints, and their final exodus in 1845 and 1846. Bial emphasizes the palpable sense of loss experienced by the Saints who were forced to abandon their homes. As stated by Bathsheba Smith: "My last act in that precious spot was to tidy the rooms, sweep up the floor, and set the broom in its accustomed place behind the door. Then with emotions in my heart . . . I gently closed that door and faced an unknown future" (35).

In 1849, several years following the departure of the Latter-day Saints from Nauvoo, the Icarians, "followers of the French philosopher Etienne Cabet" (41), established a utopian community in Nauvoo, and Bial tells the story of their efforts to create a home

for themselves in the former city of the Saints. The author also discusses the 1860 establishment of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the Midwest, and efforts by Emma, the Prophet Joseph's widow, to create a new life for herself in Nauvoo.

Bial goes on to accurately summarize the history and growth of the LDS Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Appropriately enough, he brings the story full circle and concludes his history with a discussion of efforts, beginning in the 1960s, to restore Nauvoo. The author of several children's histories, Bial has written an even-handed yet very sympathetic and moving history of Nauvoo. His book is appropriate not only for children but for anyone new to LDS history.

—John M. Murphy

The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of the Teachings of Jesus and How They Have Been Corrupted, by Obery M. Hendricks Jr. (New York: Doubleday, 2006)

Obery Hendricks Jr. is a professor of biblical interpretation at the New York Theological Seminary and an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. As a young man, Hendricks withdrew himself from Christian religions; his discovery of what he calls the "revolutionary Jesus" brought him back.

This book analyzes Jesus' teachings in light of the social, economic, and political conditions of his day. From this analysis, Hendricks outlines and explains seven political strategies that Jesus employed, namely: treat the people's needs as holy, give a voice to the voiceless, expose the workings of oppression, call the demon by name, save your anger for the mistreatment of others, take blows without returning

them, and do not just explain the alternative but show it. In the latter half of his book, he applies these political strategies as well as his own personal opinions to analyze and criticize current political practices in the United States.

For readers interested in a non-LDS perspective of the role of Jesus and other biblical prophets as political revolutionaries, this book will be especially interesting. In particular, the political critic who appreciates new, contemporary, even controversial views of Jesus' politics and their application in the world today will be rewarded.

—Saul A. Speirs

Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid, volume 3 in *Studies on the Book of Abraham* (FARMS: Provo, Utah, 2005)

This volume's twelve articles analyze the Book of Abraham, contributing significantly to needed research on this scripture. Most of the articles were presented at a FARMS conference in 1999 and are published now for the first time. Here serious scholarly study of the Book of Abraham is made accessible to nonspecialists. Topics covered include the historicity of the Book of Abraham, meanings and symbols in covenants, and literary aspects of the text.

The first two articles deal with astronomy in the Book of Abraham. John Gee, William Hamblin, and Daniel Peterson combine to argue skillfully, on six grounds, that the view of stars and of the heavens found in the Book of Abraham is completely at home in the geocentric cosmic view that held sway from the time of the Egyptians down to the time of Copernicus, before the worldview became dominated by a heliocentric cosmology. J. Ward Moody, professor of physics

and astronomy, and Michael Rhodes, professor of ancient scripture, successfully bring their two worlds together in "Astronomy and the Creation." This very interesting article offers a satisfying understanding of the processes and duration of the creation that fits both modern science and the scriptural accounts, including comments on evolution and the seven creative periods in Abraham 4.

Studies by E. Douglas Clark and Jared W. Ludlow build on pseudepigraphic works such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and Peter Nadig analyzes sources relevant to the Jewish experience in Egypt during the Persian and Ptolemaic periods, in order to draw symbolic and cultural comparisons with phrases or materials relevant as ancient Jewish backgrounds to the Book of Abraham.

The next section of the book discusses the Joseph Smith papyri. John Gee argues convincingly that Facsimile 3 and the Book of the Dead 125 are not parallel images, leaving open the task of looking for its real parallels. The article "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources" by Kevin Barney begins with the important acknowledgement that the papyrus Joseph Smith held in his hand was not the very papyrus touched by the hand of Abraham but had been copied over time. This allows for the possibility of intervening redactors who may be credited with the introduction of "Semitic adaptations" that transformed older themes in an underlying stratum of the writings of Abraham. Barney's theory places the final form of the Book of Abraham facsimiles where they belong textually—centuries after Abraham wrote his original text.

The concluding articles in this collection relate the Book of Abraham to

Muslim traditions about Abraham, to covenant aspects of women under the Abrahamic covenant, to the Israelite theology of redemption, and finally to American receptions of Abraham in the first half of the nineteenth century.

This nicely bound and edited volume should find a welcome place not just on the shelves of libraries but in the minds of all serious students of the Book of Abraham. This work is an excellent resource for beginning and longtime scripture scholars. It continues many ongoing conversations and opens several new points of inquiry. As its editors state, no attempt has been made "to harmonize the various viewpoints and interpretations expressed in these articles." These differences not only illustrate "the variety of interpretations of scripture that can come from a common background of faith" (viii), but also ensure that this book will add significantly to the growing body of scholarly literature about the Book of Abraham.

—Jennifer Hurlbut