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Modern Mormonism: Myths and Realities

James T. Summerhays

Robert L. Millet

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Modern Mormonism: Myths and Realities, by Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011).

Robert L. Millet, professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, has added to his several books designed to encourage interfaith dialogue between Latter-day Saints and fellow Christians. Considering the current presidential campaign and growing media attention directed at Latter-day Saints, *Modern Mormonism* could not have been published in a more timely manner.

Millet tackles those doctrinal points that have become sticking points between Mormons and traditional Christians, working to overcome those various doctrinal misconceptions that have unnecessarily divided them. Such misunderstandings (which are clarified in the book) include: Mormons allegedly believe that God has a finite body, therefore God's power is limited; Mormons are not Christians because they believe Jesus is subordinate to the Father and hence Christ is not fully God; Mormons believe they have the truth, so they maintain an institutional disdain for other churches; because Mormons do not use the cross as a symbol, they do not understand or believe in its significance; and Mormons supposedly believe in a salvation through works and therefore do not believe in any sort of present-day salvation.

In a tone that is both conciliatory and clarifying, Millet treats these and other doctrinal sticking points with a sensitivity and panache that comes from years of interfaith dialogue. A highlight of Millet's approach is in chapter 10, "Usurping the Divine Throne," which addresses the criticism that Mormon belief disparages God's greatness by asserting that men and women can become like God. Millet

frames the issue of deification in terms of generosity: Is God or is God not so generous that he desires to give mankind all that he has? Millet argues that God "is not possessive with his powers" (85). In his infinite magnanimity, God does indeed seek to exalt his children; such generosity does not lower God to the level of mankind but instead exalts him to an even higher glory, power, and dominion.

This book will give insight to both a general Christian audience and to Latter-day Saints in how to engage in friendly conversation with each other. Millet's book is an example of how to give others the maximum benefit of the doubt while at the same time sticking to our doctrinal guns, so to speak.

Modern Mormonism is an affordable book that can be given as a gift to friends or relatives who are interested in an introduction to those Mormon concepts that are most often misunderstood. A welcome relief in our current climate of divisive online message boards and misleading media sound bites, Millet's book is an example of writing with charity and understanding to a world of diverse traditions.

—James T. Summerhays