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## Talking Doctrine: Mormons and Evangelicals in Conversation

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*Talking Doctrine: Mormons and Evangelicals in Conversation*, edited by Richard J. Mouw and Robert L. Millet (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2015)

In recent years, Mormons and contemporary Christians have come together in order to better understand one another. Unexpected strides have been made in discovering the commonalities and differences that exist between both groups. A significant attempt was made in 1997 with the publishing of *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* by Stephen Robinson and Craig Blomberg. Ten years later, Donald W. Musser (Christian scholar) and David L. Paulsen (Mormon scholar) edited a volume of essays by both Christian and Mormon scholars titled *Mormonism in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies*.

During the ten-year publishing span of these two seminal works, many others have worked and published tirelessly on interfaith relations. Two of the most prominent have been scholars Robert L. Millet (Brigham Young University) and Richard J. Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary), who have come together to edit a compilation of essays published by InterVarsity Press.

The first part of *Talking Doctrine* contains stand-alone essays—by either Evangelical or Mormon scholars—about personal experiences with the fifteen-year interfaith dialogue that made this culminating work possible. Part two of the book presents essays on “specific doctrinal discussions.” Rather than impose an Evangelical or Mormon viewpoint on a particular doctrine with subsequent response essays (such as in *Mormonism in Dialogue*), each scholar represents both sides fairly and accurately in one essay on subjects such as the Trinity and becoming as God. These

essays provide substantial but clear and concise summations of both viewpoints. Readers interested in what connects and separates Mormons from Evangelicals will find insight and notice a lack of hostility on every page.

Both Mouw and Millet explain the origins of *Talking Doctrine* in the preface. Nine Mormon and ten Evangelical scholars met at BYU in the spring of 2000 to openly question and discuss each other’s beliefs. Many doubts and concerns existed in the attendees’ minds at this first meeting. Millet and others wondered what the whole point of it was: To convert one another? To make sure the other understood what Mormons/Evangelicals believe? As they continued to meet once or twice a year, the tensions eased, and the motivation became less about being understood and more about understanding one another (59).

Such a dialogue shows the need to walk in another religion’s shoes before attempting to represent it; the kindness and respect that flow through these pages illustrate the hard-earned right of these scholars to speak for one another. In the preface, Mouw and Millet point to another significant feat: Mormons and Evangelicals share many more core values than they realize, and it would be to their best interest to unite under the name of Christianity against the “influences in our world that threaten to tear at the very fabric of our society” (11). The book is very readable and speaks to all people, no matter the level of awareness of Christian doctrine, because all readers can benefit by improving how they approach other religions. Whatever pulls readers to engage this book, even if only curiosity, it will be worth their time.

—Christine Wilkins