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## The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism

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The author coins the term “doctrinomial” to describe the work, underpinning its peculiar nature as a combination memoir, doctrinal explication, and personal interpretation—a model mirrored in the book’s three sections. The first section is a memoir that explores key experiences growing up in traditional African-American culture in and around the Jim Crow South. Those challenges prepared him to hear and accept the gospel as a student at North Carolina State University—and deal with the social and cultural backlash that he felt both as he finished his undergraduate degree at NC State and as he went on (after serving an LDS mission) to the somewhat alien environment of Brigham Young University, being the first black student accepted at the J. Reuben Clark Law School. Hamilton is clear and direct about the dissonance he often felt as he tried to reconcile a gospel of peace and unity with a culture that had not yet learned to comfortably accommodate an accomplished black Mormon, particularly one with a peculiar sense of humor.

The second section lays out the commonly understood understanding of doctrine on blacks and the priesthood, then supplements it with his own hard-won understanding of that same doctrine. This section is a bit unusual in that it works to explain rather than attack or condone, and shows a remarkable charity even while exploring the mismatches between practice and preaching. Hamilton explores the historical context leading up to the revelation on the priesthood, the process of obtaining that revelation, and the sometimes harsh responses to it both inside and outside the Church. This is also where he presents and explicates the parable of the laborer as a thematic and metaphorical frame for integrating the three sections and directly addressing the ongoing challenges still faced by the Church.

The third section then goes on to show Hamilton’s personal understanding and testimony of hope, as well as his calling on the Church to embrace the challenge of building a more perfect faith with a perfect brightness of hope—difficult history and personal experience notwithstanding. His emphasis on understanding, without either condemning or condoning, reveals a strong testimony of both the gospel of Jesus Christ and its (ongoing) restoration.

*Last Laborer* is a powerful exploration of racial issues offered with admirable clarity, incisive wit, and a deep and abiding charity that speaks eloquently to the challenge and promise of a constant and hopeful effort to draw nearer to the truth.

—Scott R. Parkin

*The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism*, edited by Terryl L. Givens and Philip L. Barlow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

The *Oxford Handbook* series publishes academic essays in particular fields within the humanities and social sciences. This volume focuses on a growing subgenre of religious studies—Mormonism. Terryl Givens and Philip Barlow have brought their considerable experience and expertise to the task of assembling and editing this collection of essays on topics about Mormon history, theology, and lived religion. Givens is a professor of literature and religion at the University of Richmond and the author of several books, including *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity*. Barlow is a professor of Mormon history and culture at Utah State University and the author of *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion*. The other

contributing authors serve in various academic fields, and the book includes their biographies so that the reader may better contextualize the diverse perspectives of the essayists.

*The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism* is organized into eight sections beginning with “History of Mormonism.” This section discusses not only the history of Mormonism, but also the development of Mormon studies as a scholarly field. Essays explore topics on Mormons in Utah and around the world, women’s relationship with the Church, and differences between Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ. The next two sections, “Revelation and Scripture” and “Ecclesiastical Structure and Praxis,” give broad overviews of elements in the Church such as the Bible and the Book of Mormon, revelation on an individual and Church level, missionary work, the priesthood, and temples. “Mormon Thought,” the fourth section, focuses more on theology than the other sections. The doctrines of revelation, the nature of God, the Atonement, and the plan of salvation are all included. The “Mormon Society” section treats social discussions such as family structure, gender, race, politics, and lived religion. “Mormon Culture” examines popular and folk culture, the relevance of geography in Mormon culture, and relationships with art, architecture, literature, music, and media. The *Oxford Handbook* concludes with “The International Church” and “Mormonism in the World Community.” In these final two sections, Mormonism is studied in its locations in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Pacific, and also in relation to world religions, law, and politics.

*The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism* contributes considerably to the burgeoning field of Mormon studies. The essays are logically and neatly organized in the eight sections, yet each topic is distinct.

The essays are current and should provide a valuable resource for those in Mormon studies, as well as for general readers interested in the open landscape of American and world religions. The *Oxford Handbook* is not so much a reference handbook as it is a collection of essays, editorials, and articles. This guide will give modern scholars an understanding of the status of Mormon studies today and the possibilities for where it can go in the future.

—Janeen Christensen

*Meine Suche nach dem lebendigen Gott: Gedanken aus dem Leben von F. Enzo Busche*, edited by Tracie A. Lamb, translated by Wolfgang Gebauer (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2015)

In 2004, Deseret Book published *Yearning for the Living God: Reflections from the Life of F. Enzo Busche*. Eleven years later, this book was translated and published in German by Leipziger Universitätsverlag (Leipzig University Press), a noteworthy and perhaps unique publishing event in Latter-day Saint history. That a prestigious German university press would publish the biography of an LDS General Authority speaks volumes about the respect Elder Busche still commands in his native land.

Born in Dortmund in 1930, three years before Hitler’s rise to power, Enzo found himself at age fourteen drafted into the faltering German army. When the war ended, he, along with most of his fellow countrymen and -women, learned the horrible truth about Hitler’s Third Reich. Enzo found himself full of questions: Who is man? Is there a God? What is the purpose of life? What happens after death?

So began his search for the living God, which eventually brought him in contact with the Mormon missionaries.