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Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century

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Patrick Q. Mason, ed., *Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016)

At its heart, *Directions for Mormon Studies in the Twenty-First Century* is a celebration of religious studies in general and of Mormon studies in particular. The book presents twelve provocative essays written by scholars from multiple disciplines and various parts of the world. The essays are divided into five parts, each part focusing on either a topic or a methodology.

Though the book does present some new research, its value lies in the authors' insights, which form a cohesive argument in favor of propagating and deepening Mormon studies. Each of the essays introduces a problem that exists either in Mormon studies or in the Mormon world, argues that further research is needed to solve the problem, and presents a small example of what that research can look like.

Part 1 shows how scholars can use political and sociological theory—particularly progressivism and studies of ethnicity—to better understand the Church and its members. Part 2 delves into Africa and Japan, suggests a deeper study of world cultures as they relate to Mormonism, and calls for a reevaluation of what many Mormons consider “gospel culture.” Part 3 encourages scholars to move beyond the study of race relations between white Mormons and their nonwhite neighbors and to consider nonwhite perspectives and experiences within Mormonism. Part 5 similarly urges scholars to examine nontraditional Mormon memoirs to get a fuller picture of the Mormon experience and considers the role and significance of record keeping in the Church.

While the other parts of the book encourage certain methodologies merely

by extension, part 4 focuses explicitly on methodology. The essays in this part—written by an economist, two sociologists, and a historian, respectively—demonstrate the extent to which Mormon studies could benefit from expanding beyond the discipline of history.

Reading *Directions* will help new Mormon studies scholars who want to better grasp the field as they prepare to contribute to it. The book will also be helpful to LDS individuals who are not scholars but who would like an introduction to Mormon scholarship and issues facing the Mormon world.

The editor of *Directions*, Patrick Q. Mason, is the Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies and associate professor of religion at Claremont Graduate University.

—Isabella Markert

Craig James Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara Morgan Gardner, eds., *Foundations of the Restoration: Fulfillment of the Covenant Purposes* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2016)

This volume is a collection of fifteen papers presented at the forty-fifth annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, held in October 2016. The title and subject matter of the symposium were drawn from the LDS Institute course titled “Foundations of the Restoration,” which explores the events surrounding the founding of the Church and early Mormonism. The editors, Craig James Ostler, Michael Hubbard MacKay, and Barbara Morgan Gardner, are all members of BYU’s Church History and Doctrine Department.

The volume covers a variety of topics, including the Sabbath day, eternal marriage, conceptions of Zion, consecration, Hyrum Smith’s Liberty Jail letters,