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Religion and Families: An Introduction

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sometimes fascinating, though uneven, glimpse of the LDS experience since 1945.

—Roger Terry

Loren D. Marks and David C. Dollahite, *Religion and Families: An Introduction*, Textbooks in Family Studies Series (New York: Routledge, 2017)

Religion and Families is a new book offered by two BYU professors: Loren D. Marks and David C. Dollahite, who both work in the School of Family Life. The work is meant to be used as an undergraduate textbook and is part of a series offered by Routledge, Textbooks in Family Studies, whose purpose is to “pair leading scholars with core topics in the field of family studies that are surprisingly underrepresented” (xv). One of these “core topics” is religion. Indeed, in the preface, the authors assert that in all their years of teaching courses that touch on the connection between families and religion, they had yet to find an undergraduate textbook addressing the topic. This book fills in this gap and claims to be “the first multidisciplinary text to address the growing scholarly connection between religion and family life” (i).

The work comprises thirteen chapters that rely on evidence from several academic studies, including some of the authors’ previous research. The work also provides data from more recent research done by the authors—namely,

interviews with about two hundred families from varying religious backgrounds.

The book begins with a broad discussion of the definition of religion and why religion matters in families. The following chapters focus on religion’s influence in some of the particular aspects of family life, like marriage and parenting. The authors then draw largely on their personal interviews to discuss the role of religion in Muslim and Jewish families in the United States. The final chapters discuss religion and the processes of coping with stress and forgiving within families.

Because the book was designed to be a textbook, it is full of helpful study aides, including a glossary, summary sections, and review questions. Although the book states that it is intended to be used by students and teachers (mainly in the field of family studies and religion but also in psychology, sociology, human development, social work, pastoral counseling, and even philosophy), anyone who is interested in the relationship between religion and families—and Latter-day Saints certainly fit in this category—will find this book interesting. It is grounded in research and evidence, but unlike some other scholarly works, the text is refreshingly accessible. The authors reference their own personal experiences at times, which make the book not only informative but also enjoyable.

—Alison Palmer