

Brief Notices

Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family, edited by David C. Dollahite (Bookcraft, 2000)

In 1995, the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a statement titled *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*. The proclamation on the family, as it has come to be known, has engendered considerable discussion, and this book joins that discussion with a probing and extensive commentary of the declaration. The book was produced by the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University under the editorial direction of David C. Dollahite, professor of marriage, family, and human development. The title of the book's introduction provides its purpose in a nutshell: "The Proclamation as Prophetic Guidance for Strengthening the Family."

Initiated in 1997, the project purposed to create a one-volume book to teach and support the principles of happy and successful family life as revealed in the proclamation. More than one hundred authors representing over thirty academic disciplines and a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds were involved. All of the authors have been at BYU at some time as faculty or students. The editorial board provided peer review; in addition, over one hundred students reviewed drafts of papers and provided feedback.

The resulting collection includes a mixture of scholarly research, personal essays, and practical suggestions. The book is arranged in nine sections covering different subtopics of the proclamation. Each chapter begins with a quote from the proclamation to indicate the point or principle being discussed. Most sections include several scholarly chapters plus

one or more personal essays. The chapters are well documented from both sacred and scholarly sources. Theory and application are included, along with critiques of opposing philosophies. The reflective personal essays provide readers a sense of involvement and offer additional insights. The first eight sections run the gamut from doctrines on marriage and the family to the sacred responsibilities of parents. Practical tips are scattered throughout in shaded text boxes, highlighting advice, principles, quotes, arguments, and examples. Section nine offers additional suggestions and tips, making this akin to a workbook based on sacred principles. The combination of approaches in one book is an unusual but effective method for presenting this topic.

Just as the proclamation is for the whole world, so too is this book. Given the immense challenges to marriage and family life faced by today's society, concerned people throughout the world should find spiritual and practical assistance from this well-produced book.

—Connie Lamb

Finding Biblical Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon, by Hugh W. Pinnock (Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1999)

The late Hugh W. Pinnock of the Seventy has produced a conveniently organized handbook of literary devices used in the Book of Mormon. Building on John Welch's and Donald Parry's work on literary forms in scripture, the book begins with a short introduction to a wide array of Hebrew writing forms, including material on the difficulty of translating any ancient text in general and of translating