

Brief Notices

Catching the Vision: Working Together to Create a Millennial Ward, by William G. Dyer
(Bookcraft, 1993)

Writing from his experiences as a husband, father, bishop, high councilor, general Sunday School board member, and stake president, the author adds his expertise as a professional sociologist to this serious look at what it would take to prepare the Saints, their families, and their wards for millennial living.

Dyer asks readers to consider the questions “Can the Millennium begin if the Saints are not prepared to live a millennial law?” (x) and “What will our own wards and stakes look like and how will they function if we are seriously dealing with the question of becoming a prepared people?” (xi).

He then presents a model through the fictional Bishop George Pratt and his Plainsville Second Ward. The bishop and the members of his ward may not exist in reality, but what happens to them transpires in almost every ward and branch in the Church. The fresh approaches to problems and the discovery of solutions to common challenges are stimulating, insightful, and even touching.

Dyer begins with a newly called bishop’s development as he attains a vision of his calling and deepens his personal commitment and with

his efforts to enlist the support of his wife and family, his counselors and ward leaders, and eventually the members of his ward. Each chapter presents a principle such as developing stewardship, managing diversity, dealing with repentance and forgiveness, managing interpersonal conflicts, controlling competition, or meeting adversity. These principles are then taught through realistic and thoughtful narratives, which reflect the kinds of experiences nearly all members face sooner or later in their wards. A final discussion follows each narrative, summarizing and analyzing the experiences of the fictional ward members and providing practical conclusions.

Catching the Vision has many workable ideas for the perfecting of the Saints through callings afforded in wards striving to be a Zion community. It is enjoyable reading and well worth the investment of a few hours.

—Kathryn C. Gardner

Historical Dictionary of Mormonism, by Davis Bitton (Scarecrow Press, 1994)

While one of the greatest strengths of Mormonism is its missionary program, many public libraries lack objective and concise information for the curious