

theological training were overlooked, including Melodie Moench Charles, Jolene Edmunds Rockwood (publicist Beverly Campbell is the rather improbable author of the entry on Eve and it clearly owes much to Rockwood), Bonnie Bobet, Peggy Fletcher Stack, Margaret Merrill Toscano, and Janice Merrill Allred.

The physical presentation of the *Encyclopedia* is a stunning success. Handsomely designed and laid out for maximum readability, it is generously illustrated with high-quality photographs. It is paginated continuously through the four volumes, which is helpful; but volume numbers are omitted from the contents and index, which means that the reader usually has to try at least a couple of volumes to find the right one. The technical production seems to have been carefully done with relatively few and only minor lapses. The Thrasher Foundation is unaccountably written as "Thruler" (xlix). Clarissa Smith Williams is referred to in the contents and in the entry line without her maiden name, even though maiden names are scrupulously included for every other woman, as nearly as I could determine, in the entire encyclopedia (4:1567). Jill Mulvay Derr's name is incorrectly hyphenated in the contents

and on her competent articles on sisterhood and the Relief Society, coauthored with Janath R. Cannon. It is given correctly on the author list.

Carefully prepared and highly useful readers' aids are a synoptic outline (history, scriptures, doctrines, organization and government, and procedures and practices); thirteen appendices that include biographies of current officers, a historical chronology, a list of periodicals, excerpted doctrinal and historical documents, hymns, and membership figures. A glossary defines LDS terms.

Despite my reservations, I would still give high praise to the *Encyclopedia*. Of course it is a creation of its era, and the early 1990s are a time of escalating denial that there is any problem about the status and roles of Mormon women. The 1990s are also a time when the church's assertion of control over its intellectual and sociological components produce judgments about "approved" and "forbidden" topics and personnel that are frequently both nervous and unnecessary. The *Encyclopedia* will be an enduring benchmark, not only of Mormonism's fundamental doctrines and basic history, but also of the period that produced it.

## "In Obedience There is Joy and Peace Unspotted"

B. Carmon Hardy. *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 362 pp., notes, illustrations, appendices.

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THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH ONCE TOLD Nancy Rigdon, whom he was attempting to persuade to become his plural

wife, that whatever God required was right, no matter what it was (374). Smith went on to observe that "in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted." B. Carmon Hardy has painstakingly researched and skillfully brought to life the stories of many nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints who attempted to obey the most widely known aspect of Mormon domestic life—polygamy.

Through his plumbing of LDS church archives, family group sheets at Salt Lake City's Family History Library, and other familiar and not so familiar sources (such as the Record of Members located at the LDS historical Library and the Family History Library), Hardy has managed to compile a sizeable list of known plural marriages. It is post-Manifesto polygamous unions which most interests him. And 70 percent of *Solemn Covenant* (seven out of ten chapters) focus on this long-subdued aspect of the Mormon past which was rarely spoken or written about until the 1970s and 1980s.

While some readers (including me) may initially require some coaxing to accept Hardy's view of just how widespread and important the principle of plurality was among nineteenth-century Mormons, most will become at least partial believers by the end of *Solemn Covenant*. This turnaround is largely due to soundness of the author's research and the convincing argument carried by the narrative. He contends, and demonstrates, that plural marriage filled special Mormon needs from its beginnings in Joseph Smith's lifetime through post-Manifesto plurality and up to present-day fundamentalism. Polygamy, although never the lifestyle of the Mormon majority, was, in Hardy's words, "a departure of conspicuous proportions in Western family history" (xviii).

Why most nineteenth-century Lat-

ter-day Saints steadfastly defended the principle and *how* twentieth-century members were almost completely weaned from even wishing to acknowledge that plural marriage had ever existed in their church is what *Solemn Covenant* is really all about. In an exciting appendix essay aptly entitled "Lying for the Lord," Hardy lays out the dilemma which post-Manifesto polygamy made incumbent on the Mormon community at large. In early 1907 the First Presidency issued a major address in which it categorically denied any official involvement in post-Manifesto plural marriages. Yet according to Hardy's findings and those of other scholars, such was not the case. As forthright and upstanding as Mormons may have wished to be, Hardy charges that Mormon leaders, from Joseph Smith's day on, often withheld knowledge concerning polygamy not only from the general public but from many of their own followers. In his charge to leading Saints "do not betray your *Friend*," Smith had, according to Hardy, laid down a connection between secrecy and friendship which lasted, at least, until the early twentieth century (366).

And never was the necessity of secrecy more clearly evident than in regard to post-Manifesto polygamy. Internal dissent over the use of mistruth as a defense for the ongoing practice of plural marriage tore the Mormon community asunder from the lowest levels to the highest. Some ecclesiastical leaders, such as George Q. Cannon or John Henry Smith, apparently had no qualms about lying for the Lord. Others, most notably apostles John W. Taylor and Charles W. Penrose, while supporting the continuance of plural marriages, believed such distortions were reprehensible. The Taylor and Penrose stance urging more openness found few con-

temporary disciples, however. In fact, church president Joseph F. Smith would come to label Penrose “a Judas” (372).

*Solemn Covenant* deserves to be read widely and discussed within and outside of the Mormon scholarly community. While it is unlikely that all will see polygamy in exactly the same light as

does Carmon Hardy, it is very likely that most readers will be forced at least to reevaluate some of their opinions about polygamy. This book will make the thinking reader think further. And that, after all, is the most one can ask from any book.