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Review of *Perspectives on Latter-day Saint Names and Naming: Names, Identity, and Belief*, edited by Dallin D. Oaks, Paul Baltes, and Kent Minson

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Abstract: A review of *Perspectives on Latter-day Saint Names and Naming: Names, Identity, and Belief*, edited by Dallin D. Oaks, Paul Baltes, and Kent Minson. The reviewer notes that "[r]eaders will find how names carry a sacred and transformative power, both in personal spiritual experiences and in important religious rituals, such as baptism and temple ordinances."



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Every Needful Thing: Essays on the Life of the Mind and the Heart, edited by Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye and Kate Holbrook (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2022)

This important collection of essays is the result of the inspiration and insight of two generous and faithful scholars, Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye and Kate Holbrook. Melissa has an appointment as a senior lecturer at the University of Auckland and is a historian for the Church History Department. Kate, who passed away in 2022, was also a historian, who worked on such important books as *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History* and *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women*. Together, Melissa and Kate have sought out essays “on the life of the mind and the heart” from Latter-day Saint women scholars throughout the world: the Philippines, Samoa, New Zealand, Peru, Argentina, Nigeria, the People's Republic of China, and the Seneca and Navajo Nations, as well as the United States.

The book's title is taken from a verse in the Doctrine and Covenants: “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119). Latter-day Saint women scholars were invited to write about how they negotiate the complexities of faith, scholarship, family, and community suggested by this scripture.

The twenty-three writers represent the disciplines of medicine, history, university administration, music, theology, science, law, international relations, education, business, literature, and mathematics. One of the strengths of the collection is that the reader can learn so much about so many topics, as

each writer considers how her faith in the gospel increased her understanding of her discipline, and how her discipline increased her understanding of the gospel. Learning by both study and faith has helped these scholars to better negotiate our imperfect and sometimes judgmental world.

Many of the writers describe their early lives and explain how they were led to their professions. They discuss influential mentors who helped them make choices that determined the direction of their lives. Almost all of them faced some kind of adversity they were able to overcome with faith and by focusing on principles of the gospel. In explaining the work they do, they also discuss how they depend on spiritual help. For example, many were led to change the direction of their research or to find answers to research questions through prayer and by trusting the inspiration they received.

It is difficult to summarize the contributions of such a diverse collection because each essay offers much food for thought. Each reader will have personal favorites. The major gift Melissa and Kate have given the Latter-day Saint community in compiling and editing this fine collection is to show the growing contributions of LDS women throughout the world and to provide examples of how these women combine faith and scholarship in their personal and professional lives.

—Susan Elizabeth Howe

Perspectives on Latter-day Saint Names and Naming: Names, Identity, and Belief, edited by Dallin D. Oaks, Paul Baltes, and Kent Minson (New York City: Routledge, 2023)

Perspectives on Latter-day Saint Names and Naming: Names, Identity, and Belief, edited by Dallin D. Oaks, Paul Baltes,

and Kent Minson, is an exploration of the significance and practices surrounding names within the context of the faith and culture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

With recognizable contributors such as Eric A. Eliason, Don E. Norton, John A. Tvedtnes, Joseph Fielding McConkie, John Gee, Stephen D. Ricks, and Brad Wilcox, as well as the editors, this thought-provoking anthology examines the intricate ways in which names shape and reflect an individual's sense of self, familial connections, and place within the broader community.

The book delves into the historical, cultural, theological, and covenantal dimensions of naming within the Church, exploring its impact on personal and communal identity. The editors have curated articles that examine the scriptural and theological foundations, the historical development, and the contemporary practices of naming children and places in the Latter-day Saint faith. Readers will find how names carry a sacred and transformative power, both in personal spiritual experiences and in important religious rituals, such as baptism and temple ordinances.

The articles tackle contemporary issues and challenges related to names in LDS culture. For instance, there are discussions surrounding the use of middle names, surnames, and the adoption of nontraditional or diverse names within the faith. This includes culturally significant names associated with Latter-day Saints, such as names derived from the Book of Mormon or Church history and parents choosing the last names of General Authorities as first names for their children. The editors aim to foster a broader understanding and appreciation of the complexity and diversity in naming practices of Church members. Overall, the book presents various viewpoints and research findings, providing a comprehensive overview of the subject.

Perspectives on Latter-day Saint Names and Naming is a valuable resource for both scholars and members of the Church interested in the intersection of religion, culture, and personal identity. This anthology invites readers to reflect on the power and significance of names and their integral role in shaping individual and communal identities of Latter-day Saints.

—Matthew B. Christensen