from the progression of their legal status to the changing roles they have assumed in the work force to their involvement in farm life, education, scholarship, arts, and politics.

Any serious scholar of women's history, Utah women's history, or Utah history in general will want to read this book. It celebrates the contributions Utah's diverse groups of women have made to the state's history and its ultimate thesis is this: that while Utah women's experience has differed from that of other women in the American West, it has also been representative of the experience of other women in the American West. Paradigm or paradox? Scott and Thatcher's answer is, simply, both.

—Jana Lloyd

God's Country, Uncle Sam's Land: Faith and Conflict in the American West, by Todd M. Kerstetter (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In a focused journey, Todd Kerstetter, assistant professor of history at Texas Christian University, considers the promise of religious freedom in the United States. He looks closely at three religious groups: nineteenth-century Mormons living in Utah, the Lakota Ghost Dancers in South Dakota during the 1890s, and the 1993 Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. Each group sought a place of refuge in the Great American West, that region of the country most filled with individualism and independence, the mythic and heroic God's country. For each there was a dramatic and violent confrontation with both their neighbors and the government.

How far does the rhetoric of religious independence extend and for whom does it hold true? Speaking of the Mormons living in Utah in the nineteenth century, Kerstetter states that they "and anyone else who doubted it, learned that morally speaking, the Constitution is a Protestant document and the United States is a Protestant nation" (80).

To a lay reader, the book is accessible and interesting. Kerstetter sets forth the features of the three historical events with detail sufficient to capture the mood and setting of each episode. He offers evidence as a historian, fairly and without comment, allowing each narrative to set the stage. He steps us through the inflammatory rhetoric and imprudent posturing of each side. The drama between these religious groups and their neighbors stands out all the more clearly for Kerstetter's dispassionate stance. We learn that the song of the West is not truly sung on key.

Each of these histories has been told before. Each is dramatic and tragic and makes for good telling. It is not difficult to find accounts from both devotees and detractors but in this telling, the combined weight of uncompromising religious values and the collapse of promised freedoms is significant. To those questions already raised in this book, there are more. Is there a point at which it is appropriate, even responsible for citizens or government to intervene and withdraw promised freedoms? Who decides when and where?

—Liza Olsen

How Free Can Religion Be? by Randall P. Bezanson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In *How Free Can Religion Be?* Randall P. Bezanson, who holds an endowed professorship of law at the University of Iowa, surveys the U.S. Supreme Court's leading cases on the religion clauses of the First Amendment. Of particular interest to students of Mormonism will be Bezanson's treatment of *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), in which the Court rejected the

claim that the First Amendment protected the Latter-day Saints' religious practice of plural marriage.

It is clear that *How Free Can Religion Be?* is a book written by a law professor. Bezanson writes, "This book . . . is neither a history nor a compendium of legal answers. It is, instead, a set of questions and arguments, a written Socratic dialogue, with me on one side, and the reader on the other" (5). Those unburdened by a legal education can get some taste of what a constitutional law class is like by reading the book, while others who have run the gauntlet of law school will find the stream of question-punctuated commentary familiar.

The strengths and weaknesses of Bezanson's approach are on display in his discussion of the *Reynolds* case. He provides a workman-like summary of the facts, albeit one that ignores virtually all the published work done on the case by legal historians both within Mormon studies and within the legal academy generally. He then walks the reader through the Court's reasoning step-by-step, asking—without answering—at each point whether the moves made by the Court were justified in light of this or that competing argument.

The appearance of the *Reynolds* case in Bezanson's book is a testament to the continuing importance of the fundamental legal questions raised by the confrontation between Mormons and the federal government over the practice of polygamy. It also illustrates the extent to which Mormon history as a discipline has failed—with a few notable exceptions—to present the richness of its research on this period in a form capable of penetrating the mainstream constitutional discussion that Bezanson models.

—Nathan B. Oman

Believing History: Essays on Latter-day Saint Belief, by Richard Lyman Bushman and edited by Jed Woodworth and Reid L. Neilson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)

Those who enjoyed Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* will be just as pleased with *Believing History*, a collection of Richard Bushman's essays on Mormon history and his personal beliefs. The essays in *Believing History* are not necessarily related, but by reading them together one captures the flavor of both the author's scholarship and his person. The essays span a period of thirty-two years, beginning in 1969 and ending in 2001. They have all been published previously in books and journals, including some in *BYU Studies*.

The value of *Believing History* is that it brings all of the essays—and thus, much of Bushman's thought—into one place. The book also contains a new afterword by Bushman where, like the first two essays of the book, he identifies himself as a "dialogic historian" who is "fighting on both fronts" (281) of critical scholarship and uncritical belief within Mormon studies. In writing to both skeptics and believers, Bushman shows his desire to not alienate readers from either audience.

In adding structure to the collection of essays, the editors—both of whom have studied under Bushman—have divided the selections into three general categories: (1) Belief, (2) The Book of Mormon and History, and (3) Joseph Smith and Culture. While the essays are categorized as such, their richness defies categorization as Bushman addresses a wide array of historical and social issues including the possibilities for faith among skepticism, the roles of the kingdom and Zion in a world dominated by secular corporatism, the urban landscape created by early