Petrey (religion, Kalamazoo College) looks at how post–WW II political, social, and cultural transformations shaped LDS church leaders’ conceptions of race, sexuality, and gender. Petrey argues that modern church leaders were not gender essentialists; rather, they believed that gender and sexuality were malleable and fluid, that the church needed to police the boundaries of heteronormative behavior, and that Latter-day Saints must properly perform their roles as men and women. Following in the footsteps of historians like Matthew Harris, Petrey shows that Spencer Kimball’s 1978 revelation that the LDS priesthood should not exclude African Americans did not immediately put an end to racism within the church. (Petrey points out that repudiation of interracial marriage continued to be part of instruction for young adults until at least 2011.) Petrey’s book is a model for those seeking to incorporate the voices of church leaders into their work on contemporary Mormonism. The Church History Library (Salt Lake City) restricts access to the personal papers and records of modern church leaders, but Petrey’s monograph demonstrates that scholars can overcome this research hurdle and probe the minds of modern church leaders through their published writings and LDS periodicals. Adding nuance to the history of Mormonism, Petrey’s book is a remarkable addition to the literature. Summing Up: Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty. -- D. D. Hurlbut, Boston University

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