
PREFACE

The essays in this volume were first presented at a five-day symposium held in the first week of January 2000. The symposium was jointly sponsored by the Brigham Young University Religious Study Center and Continuing Education. Three papers were given in the historic Provo Tabernacle, including one by Brigham Young University president and member of the First Quorum of Seventy, Merrill J. Bateman. The remainder were given in the Harmon Continuing Education Building.

The motivation underlying the symposium had its genesis in a Religious Education administrative council meeting held in the spring of 1999. Certain members of the council, including Dean Robert L. Millet, thought it appropriate at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium to reaffirm with clarity and vigor, and with gratitude, our allegiance to our Lord and Savior, Jesus of Nazareth. We wanted to tell all who would listen, including Christians of all persuasions and those of other religious views, what we believe and, just as important, how we feel about our Redeemer.

In our call for proposals, we (the editors) indicated we were most interested in papers from a Latter-day Saint restoration perspective that illuminated essential or fundamental aspects of our Savior's life and ministry, such as His premortal life, birth, atonement, and resurrection. In addition, we asked that the submissions be faith promoting and appeal to a broad spectrum of Latter-day Saints. We would like to think the essays selected for inclusion in this volume meet these criteria.

That is not to say, of course, that all the essays are of equal merit. That is seldom the case in any compilation of papers. But we expect that all readers will find something in this collection that will enlighten their understanding of and appreciation for the Savior's mission. Some essays present new angles of vision, and perhaps a couple of them plow new ground. Others of them restate, hopefully in unique or refreshing ways, long-standing Latter-day Saint views. Not surprisingly, we did not necessarily agree with each and every conclusion or interpretation; we did require, however, to the best of our ability, that all stated viewpoints evidence responsible scholarship and be in general accord with the teachings of the Church.

One additional observation about the authorship of the essays may be significant. In most cases, the authors of these essays have spent years, even decades, as scholars and students of our Lord's ministry. But in addition to their scholarly pursuits, each one is first and foremost a follower and disciple of the Lord, a discipleship they all gratefully acknowledge.

In truth, discipleship is what this book is, in large part, about. It is hoped that any and all who read these pages will not only enhance their knowledge of the Son of Man but, even more so, increase their reverence for and devotion to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, our Lord and King.