



Women of Principle: Female Networking in Contemporary Mormon Polygyny

Janet Bennion

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This book offers an in-depth study of the female experience in one Mormon polygynous community, the Apostolic United Brethren. Women in such rigid, patriarchal religious groups are commonly portrayed as the oppressed, powerless victims of male domination. Janet Bennion shows, however, that the reality is far more complex. Many women converts are attracted to this group, and they are much more likely than male converts to remain there. Often these women are seeking improved socio-economic status for themselves and their children, as well as an escape from their marginalized status in the mainstream Mormon church. In the polygynous group women experience rapid assimilation, autonomy, and upward mobility. Bennion supports her study with narratives from the lives of women now living in the group--narratives that clearly reveal why many mainstream Mormon women are viewing polygyny as a viable alternative to the difficulties to single-motherhood, "spinsterhood," poverty, and emotional deprivation.

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