

*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982 xxiii+620 pp., index, biblio. \$11.95). Kimball has done a splendid job of selecting and organizing his father's teachings, which retrieve nicely, thanks to a comprehensive topical index. Of a similar genre but not of the same quality is Donald Q. Cannon, ed., *The Wisdom of Joseph Smith* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1983, viii+52 pp., index, \$?). Assuming that Joseph

actually said everything in the *History of the Church* he supposedly said, Cannon organizes the Prophet's sayings under topics à la the Richard Evans *Quote Book*. Inasmuch as he relies heavily upon sources derived from the *History*, Cannon thus perpetrates much of the same mythology about Joseph's personality and thinking that misled Fawn Brodie. His book is still worth having, especially if its owner is a high councilor or other perennial church speaker. Most of them need all the help they can get, even if their quotes are of dubious origin.

## Frustration and Fulfillment

*Mormon Women Speak*, edited by Mary Lythgoe Bradford (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Co., 1982), 237 pp., \$9.95.

Reviewed by Richard J. Cummings, professor of languages and director of the Honors Program at the University of Utah. He has served on the Annual University of Utah Women's Conference Steering Committee for the past four years and cochaired the Women's Conference on Managing Multiple Roles in October 1980.

I WAS INTRIGUED by the cover design of this collection of twenty-four essays by Mormon women. It reminded me of a circular stained glass window with a gently smiling woman's face in the center surrounded by four compartments containing women's hands in various symbolic postures. This design is described by Mary Bradford in her introduction as the "graphic symbol of the mandala" which depicts "the self, the wholeness of personality . . . which cannot tolerate self deception." The hands depict the four aspects of the Mormon woman's life—home, service to others, development of her own talents, and church. This simple design not only summarizes the contents of the book, it also serves as an ingenious device for organizing the twenty-four

heterogeneous essays chosen from more than a hundred submissions.

Reading these essays was a moving experience. Certain essays stand out because of a more dramatic approach or certain stylistic felicities. Despite some qualitative differences, all twenty-four authors expressed themselves so honestly and in such intensely personal terms that I am uncomfortable singling out specific essays for special praise. Still, I would like to give the prospective reader a sense of what to expect by discussing a representative sample.

The first section, introduced by the face with the hesitant smile, includes four essays which set the tone for what is to follow. These essays offer distinctive attempts at self-definition which strive to preserve personal integrity while retaining some semblance of traditional Mormon womanhood. I found them to be gripping statements in which pain and triumph alternate, displaying an admirable open-endedness befitting a struggle which will not settle for the facile solutions suggested by general conference rhetoric. Helen Candland Stark describes "An Underground Journey Toward Repentance" in which she recognizes in the assertive, angry side of her nature "an irascible witch" who must "learn to accept injustice, para-

dox, pain and loneliness" by befriending her alienated self. Karen Rosenbaum concludes "For Now I See Through a Glass Darkly" by confronting the absence of any divine visitation in her life and deciding to "reconcile my adult experience with childhood faith so that I may remain a Mormon" even though this entails settling for a larger measure of "not knowing" than of "knowing."

The section on the home depicts a woman's hand holding the hand of a child and serves as an impressive centerpiece of the book since it contains the three prize-winning essays published in *DIALOGUE* Winter 1982 issue and deals with the beginning and ending of life. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher gives an account of her first experience of "Birthing," in which she fuses the major dimensions of Mormon childbearing—the clinical with the personal, and the matter-of-fact modern approach with the mystical approach of nineteenth-century Mormon midwifery. Edna B. Laney's "The Last Project," deals with death. She relates with unpretentious poignancy how she and her husband confront the jarring news that he is dying and how they share his waning days to achieve personal and spiritual resolution devoid of bitterness.

The section on service to others deals with the heartache and breakthrough of transcending racial, religious, and ideological barriers. It begins with Rubina Rivers Forester's description of what it means to be "Mormon and brown," and ends with Phyllis Barber's personal retrospective on Mormonism's love-hate relationship with blacks.

The section on creativity contains Jean Wadsworth Johnson's "Life Beyond the Pumpkin Shell," a memorable and representative example of the dilemma confronting divorced Mormon women who are dispossessed from their "pumpkin shell style of life" and are faced with evolving from a "bread baker to a bread winner" with no previous work experience outside the home.

The final section is depicted by two hands joined in prayer and contains essays focused on worship. They serve as an appropriate culmination to the book since they deal with Mormon women's relationship to the Church and the gospel. They recapitulate earlier themes by providing different perspectives on what I would call the "odyssey of the thinking Mormon woman." This odyssey takes the form of departure from orthodoxy, a basic disagreement or a sense of alienation which, after inner turmoil, confrontation with the world, and personal growth, leads to reconciliation and a return to the fold on one's own terms.

Cherie Taylor Pedersen writes how she first ignored the women's movement, then was challenged by it to find a "comfortable middle ground" between selflessness and selfishness, and finally concluded that, because it proved a much needed corrective to an exaggerated notion of "ideal" Mormon womanhood, she could regard it "not as a threat, but as a blessing." Mary Ellen Romney MacArthur describes an ideological schizophrenia first apparent during her college days in her church-orientated "home self" as opposed to her secularized "Stanford self." She concludes triumphantly that "it is perfectly possible to be considered a liberal, intellectual feminist at church and a religious, conservative 'square' in the world and still be accepted in both spheres."

Despite its unpretentious title, this book makes a powerful statement about what it means to be a concerned, thoughtful Mormon woman in today's world with all the attendant frustrations. It offers a rich tapestry of the Mormon female experience expressed by twenty-four women representing a wide range of stations in life, age groups, and geographical regions. Reading these essays was like hearing twenty-four of the most compelling testimonies ever expressed in an LDS setting. Despite the variety of voices, I detected a common concern with the difficulty encountered by dedicated, thinking Mormon women as

they attempt to reconcile their quests for self-discovery with the restrictive traditional definition of a woman's role as a self-effacing, modest wife and mother dedicated to a life of service. Arriving at a satisfactory resolution of such antithetical concerns seems almost impossible — yet each of these women reached a positive solution. Indeed this book offers a refreshingly believable middle ground between the male-oriented preachiness of the collec-

tion of sermons by Church authorities entitled *Women* and the strident negativism of Sonia Johnson's *From Housewife to Heretic*.

*Mormon Women Speak* is above all a profoundly human document which deserves the attention of women and men alike. It should be required reading for anyone interested in the women's movement or the status of LDS women. It is certainly a must for any man who seeks to understand Mormon women.

## The Gospel of Greed

*Mormon Fortune Builders and How They Did It* by Lee Nelson (Provo, Utah: Council Press, 1981), 252 pp., \$10.95.

Reviewed by Steve Christensen, a financial consultant for a Salt Lake City investment company.

SOMETIMES I WONDER why it is that our Mormon society, particularly those of us living in Utah, are so eager to become rich and successful (that is, if wealth really brings success). As a financial consultant to clients throughout the western states I am amazed at the naivete with which many would-be Mormon millionaires set out with their positive mental attitudes to find their rainbow of wealth.

While wealth in and of itself is not necessarily a bad thing, many of us try to get something for nothing. Utah is unfortunately known as one of the fraud capitals of the English-speaking world. We tend to hope that pyramid schemes and Ponzi maneuvers are legitimate vehicles on the road of financial independence.

What does this have to do with the book *Mormon Fortune Builders and How They Did It*? Maybe not too much if all you read are the biographies themselves. I am not critical of the eleven individuals themselves or the success which they have enjoyed thus far in their financial careers. I am curious, however, about what criteria was used in selecting these eleven

as Mormonism's representatives of personal fortune and wealth. It would also appear that this wealth representation is heavily centered in Utah and excludes Mormons of more prominent stature and public awareness living outside the state.

My main criticism of the book is that it tries to create a spiritual/scriptural formula for becoming wealthy. The author relates a personal spiritual experience which occurred in 1974 which inspired him about how "the Lord gives the power to get the wealth." The formula as related by the author parallels the four first principles of the gospel. First, one must have faith in oneself. Second, one has to repent, but in the author's words, "Repentance was nothing more than a church word meaning to change, to learn, to adjust." Third, one needs to have the ability to make decisions and remain committed, much as a new convert enters into covenants at baptism. Fourth, one must follow the promptings, feelings of well-being, and hunches inspired by the Holy Ghost. To me, the author is providing a formula for entrepreneurial achievements, not a guarantee of financial success. He fails to remember such ideas as proper education, financial budgeting, and hard work, to mention just a few important characteristics in becoming financially successful.

As a young man I received my Sunday School training during my high school years