

Nebula Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America for *Ender's Game* (1985) and nominations for the Hugo Award. *Speaker for the Dead* has already been nominated for the 1986 Nebula.

This recognition is important because *Speaker for the Dead* and *Ender's Game* show Card as an intensely LDS writer, but at the level of assumption rather than assertion. While his themes express deeply held LDS beliefs, his novels do not intrude those beliefs upon readers. Instead, readers following Ender Wiggin thousands of years into the future will perceive fundamental questions of human salvation and redemption as analogues to gospel principles.

*Ender's Game* and *Speaker* demonstrate Card's mastery. Elements criticized in earlier novels—violence and destructive sexuality, for example—draw less attention because they are inherent in the novels' purposes. Ender kills, but only to

save an alien race and his own humanity and to complete the cycle of awareness, guilt, and redemption. His extraordinary talent isolates him from humanity in *Ender's Game*; in *Speaker*, he works painfully back into the community of *ramen* (sentient beings).

Card balances action with thought, science fiction with archetype, science with faith. The novels explore religion as subject and religious individuals as characters yet avoid polemics or stereotypes; the Christ-figure, for example, must stand at the foot of an alien cross to crucify another savior. Such inversions are so carefully paced that *Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead* succeed equally as SF adventure and as analogical explorations of humanity, morality, salvation, and redemption. LDS readers will find much that is thought-provoking, stimulating, and spiritually moving in both novels.

## Woman-child

*Learn of Me*, Relief Society Course of Study (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987), 360 pp.

Reviewed by Ann Weaver Hart, assistant professor, Department of Educational Administration, University of Utah.

AS A TEENAGER I read my dad's old priesthood manual written by T. Edgar Lyon. Later I found even older manuals for MIA and Sunday School by other Mormon authors such as E. E. Erickson and B. H. Roberts. I benefitted from these thoughtful lessons, written to guide people on a spiritual journey toward a deeper understanding of the gospel of Christ.

Unlike these older books, the 1987 women's Relief Society course of study, *Learn of Me*, is uneven. The lessons with clear gospel themes are strong and straightforward. However, some other lessons are virtually useless as aids to religious instruction for adults. Additionally, the image of

Mormon women in this course of study is out of sync with that being presented to our young women in YWMIA materials and presentations. This dichotomy sets up a psychological double bind that will be difficult for some to resolve.

The fifty lessons are organized into five groups: Spiritual Living (twenty-two), Home and Family Education (twelve), Compassionate Service/Social Relations (twelve), Supplemental lessons (four: "Personal Morality," "Safeguarding Our Children," "Reverence for Life," and "Fighting Drug Abuse"), and Home Management (twelve). Fourteen of these lessons are conference addresses by General Authorities.

The manual has many good moments. The best lessons focus on the life of Christ, his mission on earth, the atonement, and the resurrection. And they are wonderful. The anonymous authors provide a rich journey into faith—the awe and joy we feel when we contemplate Christ, his mis-

sion, and our goal of living a life worthy of Christians. Spread throughout the Spiritual Living and Compassionate Service sections, these lessons, rich with scriptural references, encourage us to seriously contemplate the faith which calls us to our Redeemer.

The strength of the lessons centered in Christ is threefold. They provide a simple testimony of the Savior; they provide scriptural references for those who want further study; they provide exemplary standards for lives of service and love, patterned after the ideals the Savior taught. Neal Maxwell's conference talk, "O, Divine Redeemer," particularly provides both a strong personal witness and rich scriptural references.

Other lessons also strengthen faith. The Compassionate Service lesson on charity includes ample material for an examination of the meaning of Christian charity. The Spiritual Living lesson on the law of consecration confronts serious issues of commitment, and the resource materials provided to the instructor make it possible to teach as complex or simple a lesson as a particular group needs. Similarly, the lessons on prayer, praise for the Lord, the second coming of Christ, and celestial glory set a stage for serious gospel study.

The richness of scriptural references in the gospel lessons highlights a weakness in others—inadequate resource materials. These lessons lack sufficient depth. While they all include a short list of *Ensign* or *New Era* articles for further reading, they do not offer any assistance to women who might want additional sources of information about families, mental and emotional health and development, or even the fine arts. A reference to an *Ensign* article by Addie Fuhriman (p. 178), currently chair of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Utah, raises a question: Why is none of her professional work cited? Her credentials as a scholar and a Latter-day Saint are impeccable.

Though the gospel lessons are serious and helpful, the curriculum in *Learn of*

*Me* falters when it ventures into social and "women's" issues. Here the answers are too simple and provide little assistance for those confronting serious moral questions. For example, Elder Russell M. Nelson acknowledges that, in cases of rape or incest, a decision to abort a pregnancy is complex and raises many questions. He then sidesteps the central problem, saying: "But less than 3 percent of all abortions are performed for these two reasons" (p. 290). Possibly true, but for that 3 percent, what counsel does he have? Having raised the question, he avoids the ambiguity.

The manual's discussions of family life and marriage are inadequate. "Eternal love, eternal marriage, eternal increase! This ideal, which is new to many, when thoughtfully considered, can keep a marriage strong and safe" (Boyd K. Packer, "Marriage," p. 120). This implies that the secret of a happy marriage in this life is to contemplate infinite posterity in the next. The reader is left contemplating gaps.

An emphasis on the divine and eternal structure of Relief Society results in some strained associations. For example, "Blessings of the Restoration" devotes almost four pages to the organization of the Relief Society, then poses a "thought question": "What other blessings of the Restoration will help us reach exaltation?" The answer: one-fourth of a page on the blessings of the temple (see pp. 47–51). The Restoration deserves better.

The tone of the lesson on the restoration is echoed in the manual's use of language. This book, written for women, overwhelmingly quotes men, not women. It is also filled with male pronouns. *He* abounds. Gender-free or gender inclusive language is becoming the norm in writing unless a person's identity is clear, and the insistence on clinging to the now obsolete male form seems patronizing. For example, in reference to child sexual abuse an anonymous author states: "It is especially vital that a child be protected within his own family" (p. 285). The vast majority of child sexual

abuse victims are girls. This particular use of language is ironic and inaccurate.

When the lessons confront women's roles, the range of acceptable choices is narrowly defined. Repeatedly, in *Spiritual Living*, *Home and Family Education*, and *Home Management* lessons, the authors attempt to tell us what "good women" are. This goodness is not necessarily based on the life of Christ but includes a laundry list of social criteria with "traditional roles" defining the "preferred ways of sharing and giving" (Spencer W. Kimball, "Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters," p. 123). One may ask, "Preferred by whom?"

Furthermore, this particular lesson is organized as a long list of themes in undeveloped paragraphs, a problem, no doubt, stemming from the fact that it was originally given as a talk. However, as a lesson, this format is inappropriate. A partial list of topics in this one lesson: the ten commandments; keeping the Sabbath day holy; studying the scriptures; chastity; temple; seeking wisdom; setting high goals; marriage; selflessness; tenderness; Christian service; love, empathy, and coping; developing the ability to communicate; sewing; preserving food; the development of social skills; free agency; trust; our innate spiritual identities as men or women; eternal progression and godhood; home; adultery and sexual morality; divorce; and motherhood and mothers. The woman who can organize a cogent discussion for thirty to forty minutes around this potpourri deserves far more than praise.

In the lesson on personal and family preparedness, internal contradictions begin to arise. One of the six areas of preparedness is career development (p. 304). The lesson's authors skirt the implications of a discussion on careers for women, finally settling on two quotations and one summary sentence. The first quotation is from Elder Howard W. Hunter praising "our wives" for "the heavy work load" they carry daily, then observing, "It is the man to whom the Lord has assigned the breadwinner's role." The second quotation from

Camilla Kimball advises women "to qualify in two vocations—that of homemaking, and that of preparing to earn a living outside the home, if and when the occasion requires." The authors add a surprisingly positive recommendation: "Employment should not only provide the necessary income, but it should also be a source of satisfaction."

But satisfaction is a very personal judgment, depending on a woman's abilities. Talent often directs women toward goals that require sustained effort over time. Does the Parable of the Talents apply to women who are prepared for a career but feel that they may not use it unless they never marry or their husbands die or desert them?

The contradictions involving working women are particularly troublesome. My four daughters in YWMA read handouts about women who serve as supreme court justices, engineers, politicians, and doctors. Many of these careers are difficult or impossible to begin in middle or late life or to resume after long absences. A United States senator from Florida and a ballet dancer from Utah are held up to them as role models. Young women are encouraged to value family life, to reach for the stars, to cherish their visions of themselves, and to develop their own unique talents no matter what they might be. They learn that talents are gifts of God.

Between lessons and between women's organizations the contradictions unfold. When my daughters turn nineteen and join Relief Society, the message will be very different from the world view in *Young Women*. In *Learn of Me*, anonymous authors tell them that homemaking provides "ample challenge to a woman's learning, intelligence, and creative talents." The lesson that follows is on setting goals—long-term and short-term—and using target dates. The example used is a woman who wants to clean her closets, and one of the first things she must do is "have husband" install shelves (p. 320). In YWMA women set goals and achieve success (in