
REVIEWS

FAMILIAR AND TRUE

ENDER'S GAME

revised edition, Tor, 1991, 226 Pages, Hardcover \$21.95

SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD

Tor, 1991, 280 Pages, Hardcover \$21.95

XENOCIDE

Tor, 1991, 394 Pages, Hardcover \$21.95

by Orson Scott Card



Reviewed by Michael R. Collings

When *Ender's Game* first appeared in 1985, it was immediately and almost unanimously received as a masterwork of science fiction, indicated to some extent by its receiving best novel awards from the major professional and fan science-fiction organizations. *Speaker for the Dead*, published the next year, made science-fiction publishing history when Card became the first writer to receive the Hugo and the Nebula awards for a novel and its sequel in consecutive years. Card's fans were understandably eager for more. *Ender's Game* was in some sense a self-contained story, but *Speaker for the Dead* left a number of story lines unresolved and obviously required a sequel to complete it.

In the intervening years, Card occasionally mentioned a possible third volume. Under the working title, "Ender's Children," it would not only complete Ender's story but would be, as Card noted in a 1987 interview with Dora Shirk, "cosmic sci-fi—discovering what everything is made of, what underlies the laws of the universe, that sort of thing." In *Xenocide*, Card has met that promise with a novel that does indeed penetrate to the heart of things in ways that only an LDS writer might have imagined and that for LDS readers will resonate with their fundamental

beliefs. To commemorate the appearance of *Xenocide*, Tor Books has re-released the first two volumes in revised hardcover editions, each containing an extensive autobiographical introduction by Card.

Card is one of the few science-fiction writers whose works consistently and consciously exceed the conventional limitations of the genre. His characters may be aliens; his landscapes may be distant planets or future worlds—but throughout Card is essentially interested in telling Stories about us, about humans in the here and now, and specifically about tenets central to Mormons: Card creates worlds where fundamental LDS beliefs can be "made flesh," not just as theological abstracts or as articles of faith, but as demonstrable forces working overtly in the lives of his characters.

Ender's Game, for example, dissects the possibilities implicit in the LDS doctrine of free agency, along with contingent concerns for community, choice, and responsibility. In this novel, Card interweaves strands he has been developing for over a decade to create his image of a sacrificial mediator, a Christ-like figure willing to suffer in order to save his people. Card couches his story in the landscape and characterization of science fiction. Earth is threatened by invasion by bug-eyed monsters from outer space, and it rests with a single child to perform the single act that (at least as far as humanity knows) might save the world. Card carefully brings his character, Ender Wiggin, through a complex of decisions and actions, many paralleling

the life of Christ, until the final moment of choice. Ender acts to save humanity, even at the cost of his own sanity, and by doing so establishes new and important definitions of what it is to be human.

Speaker for the Dead picks up the narrative 3,000 years later and incorporates not only all of the above but also an increasingly focused concern for family and community. Ender is still alive, thanks to time-dilation in near-light-speed space travel. He arrives at the planet Lusitania, the home of a third sentient species, the piggies. Bearing with him the cocoon of the sole surviving bugger hive-queen, he must save piggies, buggers, and humans on Lusitania. In telling this story, Card introduces such concepts as the three degrees of glory, translated first into metaphor, then concretely into states of existence as readers discover more about the piggies. Ender again develops into a Christ-figure, but this time he must *perform* the sacrifice rather than *suffering* it. By reversing perspective in this way, Card explores even more intensely what it might require to be a Christ.

In *Xenocide* Card recapitulates all of the above, as well as anatomizing the LDS belief in the eternity of intelligences. Card fashions a view of the universe that allows his characters to escape the boundaries of the physical universe and become part of the Other (in some senses, God). To protect Lusitania from invading warships, Ender must unravel the mysteries of instantaneous communication through "philotic" connections received by a device called an ansible. He discovers that philotes are interlocking entities that compose all matter. More than that, the philotes (and here one may with some warrant read "intelligences" in the LDS sense of the word) are co-eternal and immortal. As Card extrapolates from his basic science-fiction plot, the novel becomes increasingly an experiment in eternal principles used as metaphor and image. When Ender follows philotic lines into the Other, for example, he becomes in theory and in fact a Creator-God, the next logical stage in his development.

The three Ender novels are thus of interest to LDS readers not only for Card's usual strong story-telling, but also because they perform what Ursula K. LeGuin calls "mind experiments" based on LDS principles. Card immerses his readers in worlds where belief becomes concrete reality, and where understanding the nature of free agency, the stages of human existence, and the eternity of the essential cores of living beings resolves problems ranging from private and personal to galactic. *Ender's Game*, *Speaker for the Dead*,

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and *Xenocide* are among the few science-fiction novels that should appeal widely to LDS readers. The stories are fascinating and the story-telling exceptional, but beyond that there is a sense that what is being said is familiar, resonant, and True.

The three novels demonstrate the strongest sort of "LDS literature"—that is, strong writing that is based on LDS principles, but that does not deal with them exclusively. Card can explore LDS beliefs even when (perhaps especially when) he does not deal with them directly. They are assumptions that underlie everything in his text rather than superficial or surface elements. His writing thus appeals to larger audiences as well, with the result that for the time they read his books, his readers become—whether they know it or not—momentary Mormons. They see a world, a galaxy, a universe through the eyes of an LDS writer; the values and assumptions implicit in that worldview are those of an LDS writer. This is not to imply that Card is an exclusively "religious" writer; he is not. But in the process of telling his stories, he touches in important ways on important beliefs.

The only problem with the Ender book is that in spite of Card's earlier promise to resolve the narrative as a trilogy, *Xenocide* invites a fourth volume. It will be interesting to see to what extent Card delves even deeper into LDS belief in the final volume of this arresting, engaging series. ☐

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READABILITY, POPULARIZATION, AND THE DEMANDS OF SCHOLARSHIP

REDISCOVERING THE BOOK OF MORMON:
INSIGHTS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED BEFORE

edited by John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne
Deseret Book Company and Foundation for Ancient Research and
Mormon Studies, 1991, 255 pages, Paper \$8.95



Reviewed by Todd Compton

THIS BOOK IS an attempt to present the research of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) to a wider audience. (F.A.R.M.S. articles are usually printed separately and unavailable in any journal or book.) Such a volume as this is long overdue. However, even as popularization, *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* is severely flawed because it lacks documentation (I count seventeen footnotes in twenty-three articles). Footnotes are the means by which scholars show their evidence and allow readers to judge for themselves. But this is a popularization, the editors might protest. I would answer, Hugh Nibley reaches a wide Mormon audience, and his footnotes are abundant. And even *Ensign* articles have limited but reasonably adequate footnotes. It is unfortunate that this book was not documented on at least that minimal level. Without minimal documentation, these articles sometimes sound like a used-car salesman who says "Trust me! (but don't check under the hood)." As I have the highest respect for the scholarship of the contributors to this volume (as represented in previous articles), I am puzzled that a wider audience is being introduced to their work under these conditions.

Footnotes also serve the important task

(especially in a popularization) of recommending further books and articles to interested readers. A short bibliography after every article would have served this purpose without adding many extra pages to the book.

Despite these flaws, the articles, even as popularizations and condensations of scholarly work, are often thoughtful, useful, intriguing, and sometimes exciting. They are, of course, solidly in the Book of Mormon-as-ancient-historical-text school; those not in that camp may find them unconvincing or annoying. (Anyone who is seriously interested in the historicity debate should read the original, footnoted articles, not this book.) However, a main objective mentioned in the introduction—to show that the Book of Mormon is a complex book—is more than adequately achieved.

AS to specific articles, John Tvedtnes's "Mormon's Editorial Promises" is neat and reasonable: Mormon fulfills his narrative promises. Herodotus offers an interesting parallel: he begins a story, takes a long explanatory detour, then takes up the story again. This technique is tricky even for sophisticated authors composing at leisure, revising with notes and sources at hand; much harder for a young man with little education giving dictation.

Tvedtnes also discusses colophons (formalized prefaces) in the Book of Mormon; his discussion would have been improved by reference to Nibley on colophons (*Lehi in the*

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Desert and the World of the Jaredites [CW 5.17]), and a short overview of non-biblical colophons with one or two examples.

Terry Szink offers an insightful analysis of Nephi's use of the Old Testament Exodus story in describing his own. Like Szink's article, Alan Goff's "Stealing of the Daughters" compares a Book of Mormon passage with an Old Testament parallel, finding that the parallels and dissimilarities "reveal the Book of Mormon to be an ancient document" (74). The parallels and dissimilarities in this case are not compelling enough to prove antiquity, but the comparison with the Old Testament does illuminate the Book of Mormon text. Goff mentions that dancing is a yearly ritual in the Old Testament (69); more documentation on this might have strengthened his case (cf. T. Gaster, *Festivals of the Jewish Year* [NY 1978], 149; Nibley, *Since Cumorah* [CW 7.247]). Obviously, cyclical ritual events will parallel each other.

Tvedtnes's "Hebrew Background" is a rich, evocative article; however, occasional transliterated Hebrew would seem to be an absolute necessity here, and one would also like commentary on which of the Hebraisms are found in the King James Bible. For instance, the idiom "calling the name of . . ." (89) is well represented in the King James Version, and Joseph easily could have derived such a phrase from this source. Other idioms Tvedtnes mentions are not in the King James Bible.

Goff's "Mourning, Consolation, and Repentance at Nahom" examines one of those uncanny details in the Book of Mormon. Hebrew *naham* means "to mourn," and Ishmael dies at the place the Lehighites named Nahom. But Goff probably goes too far when he suggests that Laman and Lemuel found consolation in murderous plots there.

Richard Dilivarth Rust's "Poetry" is a useful literary analysis of prominent Book of Mormon poems. John W. Welch's article on Alma 36 uses his groundbreaking research on chiasmus to analyze that beautiful chapter.

David Seely's "Image of the Hand" is a fine treatment of a Book of Mormon symbol. Seely carefully distinguishes between symbolic usages paralleled in the Bible and those unique to the Book of Mormon. I really miss footnoting here: what is the Semitic word for atonement (149)? Where has Nibley written about this (149)? Where do we find the Ugaritic reference (145)? Readers shouldn't have to write a letter to the author to get this information.

Eugene England's essay on the Atonement is predictably insightful. Louis Midgley's

"Ways of Remembrance" is a valuable survey of a persistent theme. When he refers to Hebrew and Arabic "remember" words (174), some transliteration is again necessary but inexplicably absent.

Stephen Ricks's "King, Coronation" and Blake Ostler's "Covenant Tradition" deal with the ritual background of the coronation/covenant aspects of King Benjamin's last speech. Both are impressive, convincing pieces (especially in the longer, footnoted versions from which the articles in the book are adapted).

Noel Reynolds's "Nephi's Political Testament" is a valuable and interesting reminder of how religion and politics are often combined. (In modern Northern Ireland, where I served my mission, Catholic and Protestant have almost become political terms — there were even Catholic Mormons and Protestant Mormons.)

William Hamblin's warfare article seems more condensed than the other articles, thus less satisfying than the solid, excellent articles on Book of Mormon warfare he has published elsewhere. Many points need additional explanation; e.g., the Lamanite destruction of Ammonihah (Alma 16:3) as "an example of the ritual destruction of apostate cities."

John Sorenson's "Seasons of War" is vintage Sorenson in its originality, thoroughness, and careful reading of the Book of Mormon text.

I wish I could recommend this book more. With a little better balance between scholarship and popularization, I believe it could have reached as wide an audience as it has (or wider) and could have been useful for scholars as well. As it stands, though some articles fare better than others, I often found myself missing what is absent as much as I appreciated what was there. For anyone interested in the F.A.R.M.S. approach to LDS scripture, I would rather recommend such books as *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (ed. Stephen Ricks and William Hamblin [Salt Lake City: F.A.R.M.S., 1990]), the Nibley festschrift volumes, *By Study and Also By Faith* (Salt Lake City: F.A.R.M.S., 1990), John Welch, ed., *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), and the original F.A.R.M.S. papers many of these essays are drawn from. ☐



BOOKNOTES



PAPERDOLLS: HEALING FROM SEXUAL ABUSE IN MORMON NEIGHBORHOODS

By April Daniels and Carol Scott.
Palingensia Press, 1992.
203 pages, \$9.95.

TRAGICALLY, there are too many children whose screams go unattended. Many deny the screams; they say that they are none of their business; they justify them or they keep them secret in order to maintain their façades. They do this until the screams are silenced or until the screams return as painful ghosts of the past. Society in many ways will be judged by the screams they choose to hear and answer or by the screams they ignore.

Paperdolls is a book about screams. It chronicles the author's tragic victimizations at the hands of child sexual abusers. This is a victim's book. Any victim of childhood sexual abuse will recognize the feelings, the pain, and the denial. The book details the tragedy of child sexual abuse as both multigenerational and neighborhood phenomena. Along the way it also chronicles some of the devastating ripple effects such as self-destruction, addictive behavior, psychological problems, and dysfunctional families. It further confronts the indifference and denial of a culture which does not respond adequately. *Paperdolls* is a hard and heartwrenching read.

Paperdolls serves as a voice and a plea to a community to stop denying and to do something. It is neither a book that lays out a plan of action, nor is it an in-depth discussion of social and psychological dynamics that lead to and reinforce child sexual abuse. It is rather a notice to a Mormon community that child sexual abuse exists, is widespread, and extracts an enormous price. But it is also a book about the authors' therapeutic journeys toward healing, recovery, and growth.

Jonas Salk said, "Children are messages that we send to the future." The authors of *Paperdolls* remind us that we must fight to ensure that those messages are ones of hope, love, and growth rather than devastation. The screams of these authors need to be heard and attended to. ☐

—GLEN LAMBERT

"AND THEY ALL PRAYED ON"

THE CHURCHES SPEAK ON: AIDS

by J. Gordon Melton

Gale Research, Inc., 1989, 203 pages, \$24.95



Reviewed by Stephen C. Clark

As he went on his way Jesus saw a man who had been blind from his birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, why was this man born blind? Who sinned, this man or his parents?" "It is not that he or his parents sinned," Jesus answered, "he was born blind so that God's power might be displayed in curing him."

John 9:1-3 (Revised English Bible)

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, disease and other physical affliction have been attributed to divine wrath for forbidden acts. For example, the above scripture indicates that some Jews believed that blindness was the result of sin. Their concern was not with the blind man, but with dogma. Jesus' response was both a rebuke and a call to action: do not engage in useless speculation or judgment-laden distinctions, but instead love, nurture, and heal.

This book is one in a series of monographs prepared by J. Gordon Melton of the Institute for the Study of American Religion collecting official statements from religious organizations on social issues. It reflects how those who claim to be heirs to Jesus' teachings (or other religious traditions) continue to struggle to understand and apply those teachings in responding to the challenges of AIDS. While there is much to commend, the overall impression is that the churches, along with society's other institutions, have largely failed to provide inspired (or inspiring) leadership. Indeed, for those familiar with Randy Shilts's *And The Band Played On*, which revealed in shocking detail how the medical and political establishments failed to timely respond to the tragedy of AIDS, the title of this review, "And They All Prayed On," might seem appropriate for Melton's book.

That the churches, including some of the

most conservative institutions in our society, say anything at all on such a complex and potentially divisive issue is commendable. Almost all of the statements contain, in varying detail, straightforward information about AIDS and the virus that causes it, including reassurances that the virus is not spread through casual contact. Most also advocate respect for the civil rights and basic human dignity of people with AIDS (PWAs). Many call for increased education and research, and for the establishment of special ministries to provide counseling and support to PWAs and their families and friends.

In terms of emphasis, the statements can be divided generally into two categories that correspond to the disciples' speculation and Jesus' response: those that focus predominantly on the moral issues underlying how the AIDS virus is contracted and transmitted, and those that focus instead on the urgent human needs of PWAs and their loved ones. Thankfully, none of the statements adopt as official doctrine or belief the absurd view that AIDS is God's punishment for homosexuals or a wicked society in general. Many specifically refute that notion. But some persist more subtly in propagating a similar message, one that could be read to justify self-righteous complacency and even engender intolerance and bigotry.

The LDS church's 1988 First Presidency Statement on AIDS (174-75) is typical of the statements of the more conservative churches. The statement quotes from an April 1987 general conference talk in which President Gordon B. Hinckley referred to AIDS as "the bitter fruit of sin." While expressing "great love and sympathy for all victims," President Hinckley was careful to distinguish and show special concern for "innocent" victims "who endure such suffering, pain, and injustice, not of their own doing." They "will receive compensatory blessings through the Lord's infinite mercy." The implication is that "culpable" vic-

tims—which in context plainly refers to gay men—somehow bring their suffering upon themselves and are beyond the scope of "the Lord's infinite mercy." Amid these judgment-laden distinctions, the call to "reach out with kindness and comfort to the afflicted, ministering to their needs and assisting them with their problems," sounds muted and condescending.

By contrast, the statement of an extensive bi-national Christian consultation on AIDS (45-50) eschews easy moralizing and dichotomizing, acknowledges institutional dereliction, and calls for immediate action:

"Persons with AIDS and those with HIV infection are among us, and not separate from us; the crisis of AIDS is our crisis, it is not a we/they issue. The church must share in this experience, changing and being changed so as to enable society to provide a supporting presence for those who are grieving and suffering. The church must become part of the AIDS pilgrimage to deeper understanding; it must join the journey towards human wholeness. . . . In Canada and the United States our churches have been almost totally silent. Recent history painfully reminds us that silence equals death. Our deeply-seated fear of sexuality and our ancient habit of excluding men and women whose lives or words threaten us, have made us accomplices in the bigotry and violence we now must end. . . . We must act now. We commit ourselves to eradicating the bigotry and hatred that are feeding on this disease. Therefore, we call the churches to more than empty gestures and token actions. From our immense institutional, personal, and financial resources; the churches must provide effective support to people with HIV infection and all those affected by this crisis." (48-49.)

We are now entering the second decade of AIDS. People are still dying. In many cases, they are dying alone, cut off from the religious communities that taught them to trust and to love. Before long, given the number of those already infected and the rate of new infections among all groups and classes, we will all know, and perhaps love, someone with AIDS. Perhaps then we will begin to view the crisis in its true light, as a human tragedy that affects individuals, children of God, not some faceless, marginalized or sinful other. Perhaps, then we will reject facile judgments and grapple with the real challenge: reach out with love and without fear, to increase our knowledge, understanding, and compassion, to raise our voices against judgmental complacency, and to seek to make manifest the power of God's love. ☪

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