

Brief Notices

Spencer W. Kimball: Resolute Disciple, Prophet of God, by Francis M. Gibbons (Deseret Book, 1995) and *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower*, by Lucile C. Tate (Bookcraft, 1995)

Boyd K. Packer and Spencer W. Kimball served together in the highest councils of the Church from 1970 to 1985, a remarkable period in Church history. These two recently published biographies by veteran biographers provide a new understanding of the lives of these extraordinary men and their influence on the Church.

The definitive biography of President Kimball, written by his son and grandson, was widely read and became a model for biographies on living Church leaders. However, it was published in 1977—before the revelation on the priesthood, before the organization of the First Quorum of Seventy, and before the dedication of the sixteen temples completed during President Kimball's administration. The new biography is succinct but gives a full account—including the remarkable accomplishments of the last ten years of President Kimball's life. Francis Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency, gives a good sense of the struggle that President

Kimball faced with the priesthood issue. The report of President Kimball's 1977 conversation with Helvecio Martins provides unique insight into the culminating revelation of 1978. President Kimball's decision to sell the Church's cottage at Laguna Beach, which had provided a peaceful escape for Church presidents for several decades, is included as evidence for his emphasis on work.

In her book on Boyd K. Packer, Lucile Tate gives us a comprehensive look at the man who now presides over the Quorum of the Twelve. The book is well organized into major themes, reflecting President Packer's assignments and contributions, including his roles in the publication of the LDS scriptures, the revelation on the priesthood, reemphasis on the family, simplification of Church programs, and budget policy. The author weaves a well-told story of a young boy stricken with polio who becomes a pilot, artist, teacher, administrator, and priesthood leader. The story gives the reader an understanding of the experiences that shaped the thoughts and commitments of one of the Church's great leaders and teachers, as well as insight into important events in Church history in recent years.

—Clark B. Hinckley