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The Jerusalem Center photographed by a drone. Photograph by George Alawi, August 2016. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

Editors' Introduction

James R. Kearl and Dana M. Pike
Guest Editors

The Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies was dedicated on May 16, 1989. Located on Mount Scopus, the Center offers an amazing view of Jerusalem and puts the Center's students in the heart of Jerusalem within easy walking distance of the Mount of Olives and the Old City. During the past thirty years, the Jerusalem Center has made a significant impact on Jerusalem as well as on all those who have studied and worked there. Known locally as "The Mormon University," this beautiful building with its many arches provides an inspiring venue for studying history, culture, and scripture; for community outreach; and for promoting the concept that Israelis and Palestinians can work harmoniously together.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Center's dedication provided a good vantage point from which to assess and commemorate this wonderful building and the study-abroad and other programs it houses. As the anniversary neared, several individuals approached the Jerusalem Center Provo Office suggesting something be done to celebrate it. We express gratitude to them for their interest in the Center and particularly note the encouragement received from Grant Underwood, Amber Taylor, and Jeffrey R. Chadwick.

With support from BYU professor James R. Kearl, assistant to the university president with administrative responsibility for the Jerusalem Center, a committee was formed to make arrangements for a commemorative conference. The committee consisted of Jeffrey R. Chadwick and Dana M. Pike, BYU professors of religious education who have taught at the Jerusalem Center, and Professor Kearl.

This special issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly* contains the presentations and other remarks delivered at the conference, held on the campus of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, on October 11, 2019. The conference was sponsored by the BYU Jerusalem Center Provo Office in conjunction with the BYU College of Religious Education, BYU's Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, BYU Studies, and the BYU History Department. The presentations published herein follow the order of their original presentation at the conference and have generally been edited somewhat for length.

Due to the opposition directed against BYU and a Latter-day Saint presence in Jerusalem in the 1980s during the construction of the Center, a great deal of attention has already been given to the acquisition of a lease for the site where the Center was built, its construction, and the immediate aftermath. Although a few of the presentations at our conference touched on that period (for example, the remarks of Taylor, Galbraith, and Holland), we chose to give the majority of conference time to discussing what has happened with and at the Center *since* its dedication.

Our conference included participation from former students who have studied at the Center and faculty who have taught there. After the conference concluded, each participant was invited to add comments to what they had said during the student and faculty panel discussions, respectively, and their remarks published here are an expansion of the discussions that occurred at the conference.

Because this was a one-day conference, we were unable to give attention to everything that could have been covered, including the important roles and contributions of the expatriate service couples and the local staff—security, maintenance, custodial, kitchen, music, and secretarial—all of whom work so well, often behind the scenes, to keep those in the Center safe, well fed, and living in an environment that fosters learning and interaction between students and faculty. Their efforts have made and continue to make a valuable contribution to the overall success of the Center and its programs. We thank them all.

We invited Elder Jeffrey R. Holland to present the keynote address at our conference because he was the president of Brigham Young University (1980–1989) when the Jerusalem Center was being constructed, and because during Elder Holland's service as an Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, his assignments have included the Church's interests in the Center. We are grateful he was willing and able to join us.

We express appreciation to all who presented at and who attended the conference. We also thank the Provo staff of the Jerusalem Center, especially Debra Petersen and JanaLee Longhurst, for so ably handling arrangements for the conference and for assisting with many details involved in preparing the presentations for publication. And we express gratitude to Blair G. Van Dyke for his assistance with the “BYU Jerusalem Center Timeline.”

We thank Professor Steven Harper, editor in chief of *BYU Studies Quarterly*, for publishing the conference proceedings. We likewise thank the BYU Studies staff for their assistance in bringing this issue to fruition.

We invite you to read and experience, whether for the first time or by way of happy memory, the miracles of BYU's Jerusalem Center.



The entrance gates. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

BYU Jerusalem Center Timeline

- April 6, 1840 Joseph Smith calls Orson Hyde and John E. Page on a mission to the Holy Land. For reasons that are not entirely clear, Elder Page returns to Nauvoo and, as a consequence, Elder Hyde travels to Palestine alone.
- October 24, 1841 Elder Hyde ascends the Mount of Olives and offers a prayer dedicating the Holy Land for the gathering of the Jews.
- March 2, 1873 President George A. Smith and Elders Lorenzo Snow and Albert Carrington ascend the Mount of Olives and rededicate the Holy Land for the gathering of the Jews.
- 1886 President John Taylor directs that Jacob Spori, then serving in the Swiss German Mission, travel to Haifa to preach to the German-speaking Templars who had established colonies in the Holy Land. On August 29, 1886, Spori baptizes Johan Georg Grau and, later, his wife Magdalena, who anchor the Church in Haifa for many years.
- May 8, 1898 Elder Anthon H. Lund rededicates the Holy Land.
- March 4, 1902 Elder Francis M. Lyman dedicates the land again on the Mount of Olives and at the Casa Nova Hostel in the Old City, and later (March 16) on Mount Carmel.
- November 3, 1921 During a world tour, Elder David O. McKay visits Jerusalem and offers a sacred prayer on the Mount

- of Olives. (Elder McKay does not use dedicatory language in his prayer.)
- October 18, 1927 Elder James E. Talmage rededicates the Holy Land on Mount Carmel.
- 1931-1932 Sidney B. Sperry does postdoctoral work at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem following the completion of a PhD at the University of Chicago. Sperry is the first Latter-day Saint scholar to live and study in the Holy Land.
- May 21, 1933 Elder John A. Widtsoe rededicates the Holy Land from Mount Carmel and, ten days later, from the Mount of Olives.
- 1959 Robert C. Taylor is appointed director of BYU Travel Study.
- 1966 Daniel H. Ludlow proposes a study-abroad program in Jerusalem under the auspices of BYU Travel Study.
- February 2, 1966 President David O. McKay approves a BYU study-abroad program in the Holy Land with a proviso that studies be equally divided between Arab and Israeli histories, cultures, religions, and languages to make it clear to students, faculty, and others that BYU's student programs in the Holy Land will be impartial and focused on both groups.
- June 1967 The Six-Day War leads to Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai. Within a year, Israel expropriates vacant land in East Jerusalem and the Israel Lands Authority comes into possession of the land on which the Center will be built.
- January 27, 1968 Dan Ludlow leads the first group of twenty BYU students to the Holy Land. A "traveling branch" of the Church is organized.
- 1969 Members living in the Holy Land are organized into a branch under the direction of the Swiss Mission (later renamed the Switzerland Mission).
- 1969 BYU's student programs in the Holy Land are suspended during Israel's War of Attrition.

- 1970 BYU Travel Study initiates nonstudent tours of the Holy Land.
- September 1971 President Hugh B. Brown visits the Holy Land and speaks of his visit in general conference the next month.
- October 1971 President N. Eldon Tanner visits the Holy Land, but his visit is cut short by the death of Elder Richard L. Evans.
- January 1972 BYU's student programs in the Holy Land resume. The students are among the first groups to cross the Allenby Bridge from Jordan. They move into the City Hotel in East Jerusalem.
- April 1972 President Tanner makes a second visit to the Holy Land accompanied by Elder Franklin D. Richards. Robert Taylor proposes the construction of a building as a place for members of the Church to worship and to house BYU's student programs but is told, "Not now."
- September 1972 President Harold B. Lee and Elder Gordon B. Hinckley visit Jerusalem and organize the Jerusalem Branch. In a visit with the Chief Rabbi, they are asked whether the Church intends to proselytize in the Holy Land. President Lee responds that the Church does not come through the back door, but only when invited through the front door. David Galbraith proposes the creation of a memorial to Orson Hyde in Jerusalem. President Lee authorizes Galbraith to look for land for that purpose.
- November 20, 1972 The First Presidency grants permission for the branches in the Holy Land to observe the Sabbath on Saturday. They also grant permission for a translation of the Book of Mormon into Hebrew. (In 1973, an Israeli, Jonathan Shunary, is selected to undertake the translation.)
- October 12, 1973 BYU's student program in the Holy Land is cut short at the onset of the Yom Kippur War and students are moved to Salzburg, Austria, to finish their program.
- Early summer 1974 BYU's student programs in the Holy Land resume.

- 1974 Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek approaches David Galbraith to ascertain Church interest in acquiring a five-and-one-half-acre parcel of land that had become available on the Mount of Olives, landscaping it, and then donating it to Jerusalem to be a city park named in honor of Orson Hyde. The Church chooses not to be directly involved, but a Utah LLC, The Orson Hyde Foundation, is created for the purpose of raising money to purchase the land and donate it to the Jerusalem Foundation.
- 1977 The Israel District is organized (later renamed the Jerusalem District).
- January 1977 Ivan and Minnie Barrett are called to be special representatives of the Church in the Holy Land. They, and their successors (Jerusalem Center service couples), provide public affairs, humanitarian and education outreach, medical support, and support for Church branches and the Jerusalem District while living in different places in Israel and, mostly, at the Jerusalem Center.
- April 1978 BYU's student programs in the Holy Land move to Kibbutz Ramat Rachel.
- April 10, 1979 The First Presidency calls Elder Howard W. Hunter to pursue a "Jerusalem Center" project to be a Church presence in Jerusalem and a facility to house BYU's student programs in the Holy Land.
- October 20, 1979 Elder Hunter, in the company of President Spencer W. Kimball, formally announces the desire to construct a Center if suitable land can be found. President Kimball and Elder Hunter unveil a concept model of the Center to a large group of Latter-day Saints on a cruise ship traveling to the Holy Land for the dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden.
- October 24, 1979 The Orson Hyde Memorial Garden is dedicated by President Kimball. In his dedicatory prayer, President Kimball prays for the welfare of all of Abraham's children. President Kimball selects the site where the Center now sits. President Tanner

- calls for a vote to sustain the choice, which is unanimous in the affirmative.
- March 25, 1980 Robert Thorn is assigned by the First Presidency to be the on-site coordinator of the Jerusalem Center project and to negotiate with the government of Israel to secure the selected site. Arthur Nielsen, a Salt Lake City attorney, is assigned to represent the Church on-site on legal matters associated with the land acquisition.
- March 1981 The Israel Lands Authority provisionally approves leasing the site to the Church for the construction of the Jerusalem Center. This is but the first of many needed approvals as the Lands Authority's provisional approval wends its way through national and Jerusalem Municipality bureaucracies over the next three years.
- April 1981 Elder James E. Faust is assigned to assist Elder Hunter with the Jerusalem Center project. David B. Galbraith is appointed the director of the Center.
- April 2, 1984 Robert Thorn and Arthur Nielsen complete negotiations for the site and a five-year development lease is signed.
- May 22, 1984 Fred Schwendiman and Robert Smith, both former BYU vice presidents, are assigned to provide on-site supervision of the construction of the Center.
- August 21, 1984 Construction of the Center begins under the direction of Israeli construction engineer, Eleazar Rahat, with Israeli David Resnick and American Frank Ferguson as architects.
- December 20, 1985 President Ezra Taft Benson writes to Mayor Teddy Kollek assuring him that the Church and BYU will abide by commitments not to proselytize in Israel, commitments first made in a letter to Kollek from BYU President Jeffrey R. Holland on August 1, 1985.
- January 1986 BYU Study Abroad programs, not including the Jerusalem Center's student programs in the Holy

- land, are transferred from Continuing Education to the Kennedy Center.
- May 8, 1986 A letter signed by 154 members of Congress is sent to 120 Knesset members, the prime minister of Israel, selected senior government ministers, and civil servants and is published in local newspapers, encouraging the government to accept the non-proselytizing assurances from BYU and the Church as made in good faith and binding.
- September 1, 1986 Robert Taylor is made a special assistant to the president for the Jerusalem Center, and BYU's student programs in the Holy Land are separated from Travel Study and Continuing Education.
- March 4, 1987 The Jerusalem Municipality issues occupancy permits for the completed part of the Center.
- March 8, 1987 Eighty BYU study-abroad students move into the Center from Kibbutz Ramat Rachel.
- May 18, 1988 The lease for the land on which the Center had been constructed is signed. The lease extends for forty-nine years with an option to extend another forty-nine years.
- May 16, 1989 The Jerusalem Center is dedicated in a private ceremony. President Thomas S. Monson conducts, with Elders Boyd K. Packer and Jeffrey R. Holland in attendance. President Howard W. Hunter gives the dedicatory prayer.
- June 1989 James R. Kearl is appointed as an assistant to the university president with administrative oversight responsibilities for the Jerusalem Center. (Kearl had been appointed to a similar position by President Holland in February 1989, but with President Holland's call to the Seventy in April 1989, the assignment had been set aside pending the appointment of a new BYU president.)
- January 1991 The Center's student program in the Holy Land is suspended for one semester at the onset of the Gulf War.

- January 1993 The Tabernacle Choir performs in the Holy Land and broadcasts its Sunday morning programming from the Center's upper auditorium.
- September 15, 1998 Guests are invited to a lighting ceremony as the Center joins in a citywide program to illuminate the exterior façade of structures of historical and architectural significance, including the Church of All Nations, the Church of the Ascension, the Augusta Victoria Tower, and the walls of the Old City.
- November 2000 The Center's students return early because of security concerns with the onset of the Second Intifada.
- 2002 BYU-affiliated expatriate administrators return to the United States. Eran Hayet and Tawfic Alawi are asked to manage the Center's limited nonstudent activities until the Center's student programs can resume.
- August 31, 2004 BYU Travel Study is closed and nonstudent BYU-sponsored tours of the Holy Land end.
- December 2006 Eran Hayet is appointed as the executive director of the Center, with Tawfic Alawi as one associate director and a rotating BYU-affiliated expatriate as a second associate director.
- January 2007 The Center's student programs resume but at half capacity (84 students instead of 170 students in each program).
- April 14, 2018 President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, and Elder Jeffery R. Holland and his wife visit the Center as their second destination on a worldwide tour to cities in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Hawaiian Islands.
- March 2020 The Center's students return to the U.S. early because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- May 2020 The Center's student programs are suspended until at least May 2021 because of the pandemic. All service couples and expatriate faculty and administrators return to the U.S.

The Restored Church of Jesus Christ and the Holy Land: Beginnings

David M. Whitchurch

It is a privilege to be with you as we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the dedication of the Jerusalem Center and the impact it has made on the lives of so many students, faculty, administrators, members of the Church from around the world, and those who currently reside in the Holy Land. A heartfelt welcome to all.

The Jerusalem Center and the events leading to its completion and dedication in 1989 may best be summed up by a response given by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland during an interview with a well-known Utah news anchor. When asked about the acquisition of property and construction of the Center, Elder Holland said, “It was nothing short of a miracle. It was a miracle!”¹ Seeing that this conference revolves around Jerusalem, a land of miracles, Elder Holland’s statement seems apropos for much of my own presentation.

My assignment is to share *in brief* the “beginnings” of the Church and its involvement in the sacred land where our Savior lived, died, and was resurrected. While the majority of this presentation will focus on Orson Hyde, the first portion of it is devoted to shedding light on Joseph Smith and his prophetically motivated influences on Hyde’s mission and the gathering of dispersed Israel.

Joseph Smith and the Gathering of Israel

Joseph Smith received inklings of his role in the gathering of scattered Israel as early as 1823. Throughout a nightlong visit, the angel Moroni

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, interview with Carol Mikita, KSL Broadcast, “Jerusalem: Link to the Past, Hope of the Future,” video, 44:48, April 5, 2014, accessed at <https://www.ksl.com/article/29327073/jerusalem-link-to-the-past-hope-of-the-future>.

repeatedly told the seventeen-year-old Smith “that God had a work for [him] to do” (JS–H 1:33). In addition to speaking about the location, retrieval, and means of translating an ancient record, Moroni instructed the young prophet on various matters from the Old Testament (JS–H 1:36–39). Two of the passages cited, one from Isaiah and the other from Joel, alerted Smith to an imminent latter-day gathering of dispersed Israel. The prophet Isaiah declared, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. . . . And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa. 11:11–12).

After Moroni finished citing this passage, he informed Smith “it was about to be fulfilled” (JS–H 1:40). Soon thereafter, he quoted from Joel: “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call” (Joel 2:32).

Moroni told the Prophet “that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be” (JS–H 1:41). Smith informs us that after the angelic visitor concluded his message, he ascended into heaven, leaving Smith alone and in the dark to meditate on what had just happened. Almost immediately after departing, Moroni reappeared. In total, Moroni came to Smith three times that night in rapid succession, plus once again after sunrise. With each appearance, he repeated the same message without variation (JS–H 1:43–49).

Later that day, after Smith went to where the plates were deposited, Moroni appeared once again, prevented Smith from touching the records, and arranged to meet him on the same date and at the same place for the next four years. During their annual “interviews,” Smith “received instruction and intelligence . . . , respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days” (JS–H 1:54). The Prophet’s knowledge about the Lord’s plan to gather scattered Israel was extensive, even before he began translating the plates. Once he received the plates and translation was underway, Smith encountered numerous prophetic teachings about covenantal promises that God made to ancient Israel.² One such

2. A sampling of Book of Mormon references about the house of Israel can be found in the following: 1 Nephi 10:14; 19:16; 21:12–14, 18; 22:12; 2 Nephi 9:2; 21:11–12; 30:7; Jacob 6:1–4; 3 Nephi 5:24; 16:5; 20:13, 25, 29; 21:24; and Ether 13:4–11.

example can be seen from the following statement made by the resurrected Savior: “And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people; and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time, that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem, which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father” (3 Ne. 20:29).

In addition to Smith’s experience translating the Book of Mormon, the Lord furthered the Prophet’s understanding of a latter-day restoration of Israel through other means. From the very beginning of the Restoration, Joseph Smith sought and received direction from the Lord on a variety of topics. Many of these involved redeeming ancient Israel.³ For instance, at the 1836 dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph prayed, “We therefore ask thee to have mercy upon the children of Jacob, that Jerusalem, from this hour, may begin to be redeemed; and the yoke of bondage may begin to be broken off from the house of David; and the children of Judah may begin to return to the lands which thou didst give to Abraham, their father (D&C 109:62–64).”⁴

Additionally, Smith received knowledge about the latter-day gathering as he followed the Lord’s directives to make inspired revisions to the Bible. Of particular significance is what he learned about his own role in the latter-day gathering as he “translated” the latter portion of the book of Genesis.⁵

3. Each of the following revelations deal with the “gathering” of dispersed Israel. The year Joseph Smith received each revelation has been included to impress upon the reader how much Joseph Smith knew about the gathering of Israel before Hyde’s call to Jerusalem. D&C 10:59–65 (received 1829); D&C 29:7 (received 1830); D&C 39:11 (received 1831); D&C 42:9 (received 1831); D&C 43:24 (received 1831); D&C 45:25 (received 1831); D&C 68:1 (received 1831); D&C 77:14 (received 1832); D&C 90:2–4 (received 1833); D&C 101:13 (received 1833); D&C 109:61–67 (received 1836); D&C 110:11 (received 1836); D&C 133:14 (received 1831); Moses 7:62 (received 1830); and Joseph Smith–Matthew 1:27 (translated 1831).

4. Joseph Smith continued to talk about Jerusalem after Orson Hyde dedicated the Holy Land. During a conference in 1843, the Prophet said that “Jerusalem—must be rebuilt. Judah . . . must return . . . before—[the] Son of Man will make his appence [appearance].” “Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 2, 10 March 1843–14 July 1843,” 75, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 4, 2019, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-2-10-march-1843-14-july-1843/83>. The details about how these prophetic pronouncements will ultimately be fulfilled have yet to be revealed.

5. The original work Smith did on the Bible was known as the New Translation. To avoid confusion with the *Inspired Version*, a publication by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ, the name was changed in the 1970s to the *Joseph Smith Translation*. For

And again, a seer [referring to Joseph Smith] will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins [referring to Joseph of Egypt], and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days; wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.⁶

In sum, Joseph Smith learned through various means from the *very beginning* that the latter-day restoration mandated both a spiritual awakening and a geographic gathering of dispersed Israel.

Orson Hyde and His Mission to the Holy Land

This month (October 2019) marks 178 years since Orson Hyde, an Apostle of the Lord, awoke before dawn in the Old City of Jerusalem. He walked from the Latin Convent, where he had lodged for the previous three nights, and made his way to Stephen's Gate, one of only four city gates in use in 1841.⁷ As soon as the gate was opened, he "crossed the brook Cedron, and went upon the Mount of Olives, and there, in solemn silence, with pen, ink, and paper, just as [he had seen] in the vision," offered a "prayer to him who lives for ever and ever."⁸ Elder Hyde's mission to the Holy Land is both remarkable and miraculous, considering his humble beginnings.

additional information about the history of the New Translation, see Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 3.

6. Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:30–31. More detail about Joseph Smith's role in the latter-day gathering can be found by reading Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:24–35.

7. Stephen's Gate is also known as the "Gate of the Tribes" or "Gate of my Lady Mary." Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petraea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1841), 386.

8. Orson Hyde to Parley P. Pratt, Alexandria, Egypt, November 22, 1841, in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 11 (April 1, 1842): 739.

Hyde's story begins in Oxford, New Haven, Connecticut. He was born on January 8, 1805, the same year as Joseph Smith. After the death of his mother, the seven-year-old Orson was placed under the care of a neighbor.⁹ When he was fourteen, his neighbor took him and moved from Connecticut to the Western Reserve near Kirtland, Ohio. Later, while working at the N. K. Whitney and Co. store in Kirtland, Hyde decided to carefully read the Book of Mormon to determine its truth. After three months of study, he was baptized by Sidney Rigdon on October 30, 1831. Three days after his baptism, Hyde, now age twenty-six, received a powerful confirmation while working at the store: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon me in so powerful a manner, that I felt like waiting upon no one, and withdrew in private to enjoy the feast alone. This to me, was a precious season, long to be remembered."¹⁰

A new member of the Church and eager to know the Lord's will, Hyde sought direction from the Prophet. In a blessing given in 1832, he was told, "Thou shalt go to Jerusalem . . . and be a watchman unto the house of Israel; and by thy hands shall the Most High do a good work, which shall prepare the way, and greatly facilitate the gathering together of that people."¹¹ Shortly before this, in November 1831, Joseph Smith had received the following revelation: "My servant, Orson Hyde, was called by his ordination to proclaim the everlasting gospel, by the Spirit of the living God, from people to people, and from land to land, in the congregations of the wicked, in their synagogues, reasoning with and expounding all scriptures unto them" (D&C 68:1).

9. The farmer's name was Nathan Wheeler. Orson provides little information about Wheeler other than that the Wheeler family was "good" but "penurious." "History of Brigham Young," *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star* 26, no. 47 (November 19, 1864): 742.

10. "History of Brigham Young," *Millennial Star* 26, no. 48 (November 26, 1864): 761.

11. Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, June 15, 1841, London, England, published in *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 23 (October 1, 1841): 553, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-orson-hyde-15june-1841/3>. In this letter, Hyde also reported the progress of his travels en route to Jerusalem and included, as part of his letter, a copy of another letter he had written to Solomon Hirschell, the Chief Rabbi of England (1802–1842), in which Hyde stated, "About nine years ago, a young man with whom I had had a short acquaintance, and one, too, in whom dwelt much wisdom and knowledge—in whose bosom the Almighty had deposited many secrets, laid his hand upon my head, and pronounced these remarkable words." Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, June 15, 1841, 552. While the letter does not mention Smith by name, from the description it seems likely that he is referring to Joseph Smith Jr.

Completely immersed in the latter-day work,¹² Hyde was called in 1835 to serve in the newly organized Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. During Hyde's ordination, Oliver Cowdery, in the presence of Joseph Smith, pronounced that "he [Hyde] shall be made mighty and be endued with power from on high, and go forth to the nations of the earth . . . , both to Jew & Gentile and . . . to all nations, kingdoms and tongues."¹³

Five years later, in early March 1840, Hyde learned from the Lord of his upcoming mission to the Holy Land. Before falling asleep one night, he started thinking about "the field of [his] future labors." As he did, a vision was opened before him. For the next six hours, he did not close his eyes as he saw, among other things, "the cities of London, Amsterdam, Constantinople and Jerusalem." In the vision, Hyde was commanded to go to the cities he was shown.¹⁴ Less than a month later, on April 6, he attended general conference in Commerce (Nauvoo), Illinois. During his address, he spoke of the vision he had received a few weeks previously. From the conference minutes, we learn that

Elder Orson Hyde addressed the conference at some length, and stated that it had been prophesied, some years ago, that he had a great work to perform among the Jews; and that he had recently been moved upon by the Spirit of the Lord to visit that people, and gather up all the information he could, respecting their movements, expectations &c, and communicate the same to this Church, and to the nation at large, stating that he intended to visit the Jews in New York, London, and Amsterdam and then visit Constantinople and the Holy Land.¹⁵

After Elder Hyde sat down, Joseph Smith stood and

on motion, resolved that Elder Orson Hyde proceed on his mission to the Jews and that letters of recommendation be given him signed by the President and Clerk of the Conference. Elder John E. Page, also a member of the Twelve, then rose, and spoke with much force on the subject

12. By 1835, Hyde had completed four proselyting missions: Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio (1831); the eastern United States (1832); Jackson County, Missouri (1833); and Pennsylvania and New York (1834). See "Hyde, Orson: Biography," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/orson-hyde>.

13. "Blessing to Orson Hyde, 15 February 1835," 151, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/blessing-to-orson-hyde-15-february-1835/1>.

14. Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, June 15, 1841, 553.

15. "History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842]," 1043, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 23, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/215>. The Conference was held in Commerce (Nauvoo), Hancock County, Illinois.

of Elder Hyde's mission, the gathering of the Jews, and restoration of the house of Israel, proving in a short but convincing manner from the Bible, Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants that these things must take place, and that the time had nearly arrived for their accomplishment.¹⁶

Two days later, on the last day of the conference, Joseph Smith proposed "that since Elder Hyde had been appointed to visit the Jews he had felt an impression that it would be well for Elder John E. Page to accompany him on his mission. It was resolved that Elder John E. Page be appointed to accompany Elder Orson Hyde on his mission and that he have proper credentials given him."¹⁷

In the next edition of the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith published the particulars of their call to serve:

Be it known that we the constituted authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, assembled in conference, . . . considering an important event at hand, an event involving the interest and fate of the Gentile nations throughout the world. From the signs of the times, and from declarations contained in the oracles of God, we are forced to come to this conclusion.

- The Jewish nation have been scattered abroad among the Gentiles for a long period; and in our estimation, the time of the commencement of their return to the Holy land, has already arrived.

- As this scattered and persecuted people are set among the Gentiles as a sign unto them of the second coming of the Messiah [*sic*] . . . : It is highly important, in our opinion, that the present views and movements of the Jewish people be sought after, and laid before the American people for their consideration, their [profit], and their learning; and feeling it to be our duty to employ the most efficient means in our power to save the children of men from the "abomination that maketh desolate."—We have, by the counsel of the Holy Spirit, appointed Elder Orson Hyde, the bearer of these presents, a faithful and worthy minister of Jesus Christ, to be our agent and representative in foreign lands, to visit the cities of London, Amsterdam, Constantinople and Jerusalem; and also other places that he may deem expedient, and converse with the priests, rulers and Elders of the Jews, and obtain from them all the information possible, and communicate the same to some principal paper for publication, that it may have a general circulation throughout the United States.

16. "History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1," 1043.

17. "History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1," 1046.

- As Mr. Hyde has willingly and cheerfully accepted the appointment to become our servant, and the servant of the public in distant and foreign countries for Christs' sake, we do confidently recommend him to all religious and christian people, and to gentlemen and ladies, making no profession, as a worthy member of society, possessing much zeal to promote the happiness of mankind, fully believing that they will be forward to render him all the pecuniary aid he needs, to accomplish this laborious and hazardous mission for the general good of the human family. Ministers of every denomination, upon whom Mr. H. shall call, are requested to hold up his hands and aid him by their influence, with an assurance that such as do this, shall have the prayers and blessings of a poor and an afflicted people whose blood has flowed to test the depths of their sincerity, and to crimson the face of freedoms soil with MARTYR'S BLOOD.

- Mr. Hyde is instructed by this conference to transmit to this country nothing but simple facts for publication, entirely disconnected with any peculiar views of theology, leaving each class to make their own comments and draw their own inferences.¹⁸

On Wednesday, April 15, 1840, one week after the conference concluded, Hyde and Page departed from Nauvoo on their mission to Jerusalem.¹⁹ For the next ten months, they traveled in the United States, sometimes together and sometimes apart. Their intended purposes were to bolster the Saints along the way and to raise funds for their journey to Jerusalem. Achieving these aims prolonged their travels. In a letter written in late September, Hyde reported to Joseph Smith: "I left Elder Page at Cincinnati the latter part of August, and came on up the Ohio River. . . . I shall return to Philadelphia in a few days where I expect to meet brother Page, and then, if the Lord will, after holding a few meetings in this country, we shall proceed on to New York, there take ship and sail over the seas. We were in hopes of sailing earlier: but it has been impossible to get away from the people any sooner."²⁰

Although Hyde expressed a desire to expedite his departure to England, five more months would pass before he boarded a ship for Liverpool. Having returned from a mission to the British Isles a few years earlier, Hyde

18. "Recommendation for Orson Hyde, 6 April 1840," 86–87, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 23, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/recommendation-for-orson-hyde-6-april-1840/1>, bullet points added for readability.

19. Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith and Bro. Robinson, April 28, 1840, Quincy, Illinois, in *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 8 (June 1840): 116.

20. Orson Hyde to the Brethren, September 28, 1840, Burlington County, N.J., in *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 1 (November 1, 1840): 104–5.

knew of the abject poverty many of the Saints faced in England. In a letter to Joseph Smith, he wrote, “It is very hard times in England—Thousands have nothing to do, and are literally starving.”²¹ He also knew that once he arrived in Europe, member support would be nonexistent.²² Hyde knew that the best chance of funding their mission was before they left the United States for Great Britain.

Of great significance, then, was a large sum of money he received while in Philadelphia. As Hyde neared the end of giving a public sermon, he told his listeners about his mission to dedicate Jerusalem for the gathering of the Jews and the need for financial assistance. A man in the audience responded to his petition by returning home to get a purse of gold. He then sent his son to give the money to Hyde with a special request that Hyde pray for him when he arrived in Jerusalem.²³ Hyde followed through on the man’s request, as can be seen in this portion of his prayer offered on the Mount of Olives: “Particularly do thou bless the stranger in Philadelphia, whom I never saw, but who sent me gold, with a request that I should pray for him in Jerusalem. Now, O Lord, let blessings come upon him from an unexpected quarter, and let his basket be filled, and his storehouse abound with plenty, and let not the good things of the earth be his only portion, but let him be found among those to whom it shall be said, ‘Thou hast been faithful over a few things, and I will make thee ruler over many.’”²⁴

21. Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, June 15, 1841, in “History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1,” 1212, accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/384>.

22. The following provides the establishment of the Church in the European countries Hyde traveled: Netherlands (1861), Germany (1851), Austria (1883), Hungary (1885), Slovakia (1939), Romania (1899). See “Facts and Statistics,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics/country>.

23. The name of the “stranger” who supplied the gold, Joseph Ellison Beck, remained unknown until 1924. He and his wife were not members of the Church at the time they donated the money. Both would later be baptized and immigrate with his family to Utah. See Mary Afton Beck Healey, *Joseph Ellison Beck: Ancestry and Progeny through the Son Taylor Beck, 1810–1922* (self-published family history, n.d.), 3, copy in possession of author.

24. “History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1,” 1252.

The extremely generous donation given to Hyde may also explain how Hyde afforded the extra time spent in Germany to prepare and publish the first German language missionary tract. Hyde referred to the 115-page pamphlet as “a snug little article on every point of doctrine, believed by the Saints.” The tract was titled *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste, eine Stimme aus dem Schoose der Erde: Kurzer Ueberblick des Ursprungs und der Lehre*

Hyde finally arrived in New York City sometime in late November or early December 1840, where he would wait for Page.²⁵ By mid-January 1841, still anticipating his mission companion's arrival, Hyde read in the *Times and Seasons* a notice from the First Presidency: "Elders Orson Hyde and John E. Page are informed, that the Lord is not well pleased with them in consequence of their delaying their mission, (Elder John E. Page in particular,) and they are requested by the First Presidency to hasten their journey towards their destination."²⁶

Worried how best to respond, Hyde wrote a letter to Joseph Smith asking whether he should leave New York alone. Rather than wait for a response, he decided to book passage to Liverpool, England, hoping Page might catch up to him there. He departed New York on February 13, 1841, on the ship *United States*.²⁷ Hyde wrote another letter to Joseph Smith from Manchester with an explanation of his actions:

der Kirche "Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" in Amerika (A Cry out of the Wilderness: A Voice from the Bowels of the Earth: A Short Summary of the Origin and Teaching of the Church [of] "Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" in America), Frankfurt, Germany, 1842, 115 pages. See "Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste (A Cry out of the Wilderness)*, 1842, extract, English translation," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 1, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/orson-hyde-ein-ruf-aus-der-wuste-a-cry-out-of-the-wilderness-1842-extract-english-translation/1#source-note>.

25. Hyde explains in Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, June 15, 1841, 552–53, why he left New York without waiting for Page. His letter of explanation is important for several reasons: (1) it recounts an exchange that occurred between himself and Solomon Hirschell, the Chief Rabbi of England; (2) it is from this letter we learn that in 1831 Joseph Smith told Hyde he would travel to Jerusalem and "be a watchman unto the house of Israel"; and (3) Hyde shares previously unknown details about his six-hour vision in which he saw himself traveling to Jerusalem. See *Journal History of the Church: 1840–1849, 1841*, September 1, 1841 (images 191–97) and June 15, 1841 (images 135–38), Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed October 1, 2020, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=2285a7c4-f5e3-4559-9bb5-4be6524033c1&crate=o&index=0>.

26. *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 6 (January 15, 1841): 287.

27. Hyde's decision to depart when he did can be explained in two ways: (1) he was anxious to respond to the First Presidency's mandate to "hasten their journey towards their destination," and (2) with limited transatlantic crossings available, timing was crucial. Sailing ships took an average of thirty-two days to cross. Missing a scheduled departure would have been costly. See the description under "Painting, Garrick," National Museum of American History, accessed January 14, 2020, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1301989, for passage times between Liverpool and New York. Elder Page wrote Joseph Smith from Philadelphia six months after Hyde had departed to explain why he did not go with Hyde. In his letter, he told the Prophet that he had insufficient funds to travel to Jerusalem. In June of 1841, George A. Smith, also a member of the Twelve, reported to Joseph Smith that he had met with Page in

In my last to you, from New York, I requested you to write me a letter about the propriety of going on without Elder Page and direct it to Manchester in this country. But I feel perfectly justified at present in doing as I have; and I calculate to hasten on, just as soon as the brethren sail for America. Yet I should be extremely glad to hear from you at any time, and shall be happy to abide by your advice and counsel. But if I hear nothing from you to the contrary, I shall if the Lord will, hasten on as fast as possible without him. I have been greeted with a hearty welcome in this country by the saints where we were acquainted, I do assure you.²⁸

As seen in his vision years earlier, Hyde would now proceed unaccompanied to London, Amsterdam, Constantinople, and Jerusalem.

Hyde continued to demonstrate the same tenacious commitment to complete his mission as he had done since leaving Nauvoo; however, now alone and still far from Jerusalem, he seemed to sense the full weight of what was ahead. He eloquently expressed his gratitude to the Prophet for buoying him up during these challenging times. In a letter from Bavaria,²⁹ he wrote, “The friendship and good-will which are breathed towards me through all your letters, are received as the legacy which noble minds and generous hearts are ever anxious to bequeath. They soften the hard and rugged path in which Heaven has directed my course. They are buoyancy in depression,—joy in sorrow; and when the dark clouds of desponding hope are gathering thick around the mental horizon, like kind angels from the fountain of mercy, they dispel the gloom, dry the tear of sorrow, and pour humanity’s healing balm into my grieved and sorrowful heart.”³⁰

Philadelphia and advised him to catch up to Hyde in England. Elder G. A. Smith offered to assist Page in every way possible, but Page rejected his offer. “Elder Smith subsequently learned that Elder Page had sufficient money, without collections to have taken him through to England.” See Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, June 15, 1841, 552–53; *Journal History of the Church: 1840–1849*, 1841.

28. Orson Hyde to Joseph Smith, April 17, 1841, Manchester, England, in *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 18 (July 15, 1841): 482–83.

29. Hyde wrote this letter in July 1841 from Ratisbon (Regensburg), Bavaria, a city on the Danube River. See “Letter from Orson Hyde, 17 July 1841,” 570–73, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 23, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-orson-hyde-17july-1841/1>. Hyde spent a total of ten months in Ratisbon, two months on his way to Jerusalem, and eight months after he returned. Most of his time there was spent learning German, translating into German a previously written English document and arranging for it to be published. See note 24 above.

30. “Letter from Orson Hyde, 17 July 1841,” 572.

In addition to these emotional hardships, Hyde faced physically demanding trials as he traveled in the regions governed by the Ottoman Empire. For example, when sailing from Smyrna (modern-day Izmir, Turkey) to Beirut, he wrote, “We only took in stores for one week, thinking that would surely be sufficient, as the voyage is usually made in four days.”³¹ A delay resulted from lack of wind that becalmed his ship, extending a relatively short voyage to nineteen days. Famished, Hyde resorted to eating snails gathered from the rocks, “but the greatest difficulty was,” he said, “I could not get enough of them.” When the ship finally ported at Beirut, he found that in his weakened condition he did not have the strength to get up and “go on shore after the slight exertion of drawing on [his] boots.”³² He also learned firsthand the reality of recent fighting taking place between Egyptian and Syrian forces.³³ One report stated that eight hundred people had recently been killed not far from Beirut, and the general turmoil at that time had left much of Lebanon in shambles.³⁴

Orson Hyde arrived in Jaffa on Tuesday, October 20, 1841. After stopping at the American consulate to get a letter of recommendation

31. Orson Hyde to Parley P. Pratt, October 20, 1841, Jaffa, Palestine, in *A Voice from Jerusalem, or a Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde, Missionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, to Germany, Constantinople, and Jerusalem* (Liverpool: P. P. Pratt, 1842), 34, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/2587>.

32. Hyde to Pratt, October 20, 1841, 34. In a letter to Parley P. Pratt, Hyde would write again about part of the journey: “The Lord knows that I have had a hard time, and suffered much. . . . The heat is most oppressive, and has been all through Syria. I have not time to tell you how many days I have been at sea, without food, or how many snails I have eaten; but if I had had plenty of them, I should have done very well.” Orson Hyde to Parley P. Pratt, November 22, 1841, Alexandria, Egypt, in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 11 (April 1, 1842): 739.

33. The Second Egyptian-Ottoman War was fought from 1839 to 1841, when the Ottoman Empire, supported by Britain, Austria, and Russia, moved to reclaim Lebanon from Egyptian forces under the leadership of Mohamed Ali’s general Ibrahim Pasha.

34. Hyde recounted the state of lawlessness, murder, theft, and political difficulties in and around Beirut while stranded on a ship during a twenty-eight-day quarantine at Trieste, Italy. “Syria at present is in a very unsettled state. The Drewzes [Druze] and Catholics are fighting almost constantly. They sometimes kill hundreds and hundreds of a day. In some sections it is not infrequent that the traveller meets some dozen or twenty men by the way-side without heads, in a day. In a letter from Bavaria, I stated that hostilities had re-commenced between the Turks and Egyptians; I took the statement from a German paper, but it was a mistake. The hostilities were between the lesser tribes in Syria.” Orson Hyde to the Twelve, January 1, 1842, Trieste, Italy, in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 18 (July 15, 1842): 852.

from the local consul, he happened on a company of English gentlemen with “many” armed guards, who offered to let Hyde travel with them to Jerusalem at little to no cost.³⁵ It was a welcome gesture. He hurriedly wrote a letter to Parley P. Pratt, editor of the *Millennial Star*, to report his progress: “I have only time to say a few words; but through the favor of heaven I am well and in good spirits, and expect, in a day or two, to see Jerusalem.”³⁶ The forty-five-mile overland trek from Jaffa to Jerusalem took Hyde and his company two days. Hyde eloquently described his first impressions of seeing Jerusalem in a separate letter to Parley P. Pratt written a few months later from Trieste, Italy:

Since it has pleased the Lord to grant unto me health and prosperity—to protect me from the dangers of the climates—from the plague and pestilence that have carried death and mourning on their wing, and return me again in safety to a land of civilized life, these things demand my highest gratitude, as well as demonstrations of praise and thanksgiving, to His exalted name.

As a member, therefore, of your honorable quorum, bearing, in common with you, the responsibility under which Heaven has laid us, to spread the word of life among the perishing nations of the earth, allow me to say, that, on the 21st of October last, “my natural eyes, for the first time beheld” Jerusalem; and as I gazed upon it and its environs, the mountains and hills by which it is surrounded, and considered, that this is the stage upon which so many scenes of wonders have been acted, where prophets were stoned, and the Saviour of sinners slain, a storm of commingled emotions suddenly arose in my breast, the force of which was only spent in a profuse shower of tears.³⁷

Hyde entered the Old City of Jerusalem through Jaffa gate. He then sought the assistance of an American missionary by the name of George Backus Whiting, a well-seasoned missionary who had been working in the region for many years. Whiting and Charles Seldon Sherman were employed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to work with and bring Jews to Christ.³⁸ Whiting took Hyde to

35. This happenstance meeting saved Hyde a considerable amount of money, since the route between Jaffa and Jerusalem was extremely dangerous. See Hyde to Pratt, October 20, 1841, 33.

36. Hyde to Pratt, October 20, 1841, 33.

37. Hyde to the Twelve, January 1, 1842, 841.

38. Whiting and Sherman were in Jerusalem on assignment from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.). Between 1810 and 1870 its membership consisted of Reformed Christian traditions such as Presbyterians,



View of Jerusalem from level 7. Photograph by Sigal Kolton. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.



Nineteenth-century Jerusalem from near the later location of the Jerusalem Center. Courtesy Library of Congress.

the Latin Convent (Terra Santa) and reported, “And there engaged for me my board and lodging at a reasonable compensation, and said that he would keep a little watch to see that I was well taken care of. This expression of kindness did not escape my notice.”³⁹ Within a matter of hours, Sherman and Charles Alonzo Gager, a missionary friend of Sherman visiting from Connecticut, stopped by the Latin Convent to see Hyde. “After some considerable conversation upon the state of affairs in general, in America,” wrote Hyde, “I introduced to them the subject of my mission to that place; and observed, that I had undertaken to do a good work in the name of the Lord, and had come there for a righteous purpose, and wished their co-operation and friendly aid. They assured me that they should be happy to render me any assistance in their power to do good.”⁴⁰

Exhausted from his travels and from the extreme heat inundating the region, Hyde requested that they meet at another time so that he could rest. It appears from his letters that he spent a good part of the next day, Friday, at the Latin Convent working on a document that he could share with the American missionaries. His object in doing so was to clearly tell them his purpose in coming to Jerusalem. The meeting took place on Saturday, October 23, at Whiting’s home.⁴¹

After the usual salutations were past, and all quietly seated, I expressed to them my gratitude for that opportunity of bearing testimony to the glorious reality, that the Lord was about to visit his people, and also my gratitude to him whose hand had been stretched out for my safety and protection, and also to bear me onward to the place where mercy, with all her celestial charms, was embodied in the person of his own Son.

I then took the liberty of reading the document containing the object of my mission there, and were it not for its length I would here insert it. After it was read, all sat in private meditation until Mr. Gager interrupted the silence by asking wherein the doctrines of our church differed from the doctrines of the established orthodox churches.⁴²

In recently located documentation, Gager described his impressions of the same meeting:

Congregationalists, and German Reformed churches. Their primary outreach included numerous non-Christianized countries and American Indian groups.

39. Hyde to the Twelve, January 1, 1842, 841.

40. Hyde to the Twelve, January 1, 1842, 841.

41. Whiting had recently moved to a new home located just inside Jaffa Gate.

42. Hyde to the Twelve, January 1, 1842, 848.

Sat 23rd [October 1841] Called at Br Whiting's and there had an interview with Mr Hyde a Mormonite from Illinois, who has come out to Jerusalem by special commission from God to smite the earth and rebuke the curse of this afflicted land. . . .

He is a man of simplicity and has every appearance of being sincere. He believes in their power to work miracles if faithful to God. Adheres as do all their preachers to the directions given by our Lord when sending out his 12 disciples accepts all the canons of scripture and some new revelations.⁴³

The next morning, Sunday, Orson Hyde arose early to fulfill the long-awaited mission that had brought him to the Holy Land. He prayed (in part),

O Thou! who art from everlasting to everlasting, eternally and unchangeably the same, even the God who rules in the heavens above, and controls the destinies of men on the earth, wilt Thou not condescend, through thine infinite goodness and royal favour, to listen to the prayer of thy servant which he this day offers up unto thee in the name of thy holy child Jesus, upon this land where the Sun of Righteousness sat in blood, and thine *Anointed One* expired. . . .

Now, O Lord! thy servant has been obedient to the heavenly vision which thou gavest him in his native land; and under the shadow of thine outstretched arm, he has safely arrived in this place to dedicate and consecrate this land unto Thee, for the gathering together of Judah's scattered remnants, according to the predictions of the holy prophets. Everlasting thanks be ascribed unto thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast preserved thy servant from the dangers of the seas, and from the plague and pestilence which have caused the land to mourn.—The violence of man has also been restrained, and thy providential care by night and by day has been exercised over thine unworthy servant. Accept, therefore, O Lord, the tribute of a grateful heart for all past favours, and be pleased to continue thy kindness and mercy towards a needy worm of the dust. . . .

Grant, therefore, O Lord, in the name of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to remove the barrenness and sterility of this land, and let springs of living water break forth to water its thirsty soil. Let the vine and the olive produce in their strength, and the fig tree bloom and flourish. . . .

43. Charles A. Gager: *Travels: Journal of Travel to Canary Islands, Spain, Jerusalem, with Commonplace Book and Notes, 1836–1842*. The entire Gager letter is forthcoming in a future publication.



Orson Hyde Dedicates the Promised Land, by Clark Kelley Price. Courtesy the artist.

Let a peculiar blessing rest upon the presidency of thy Church, for at them are the arrows of the enemy directed. . . . Also the quorum of the Twelve, do thou be pleased to stand by, for thou knowest the obstacles which we have to encounter, the temptations to which we are exposed, and the privations which we must suffer. Give us, therefore, strength according to our day, and help us to bear a faithful testimony of Jesus and his gospel, and to finish with fidelity and honour the work which thou hast given us to do, and then give us a place in thy glorious kingdom. And let this blessing rest upon every faithful officer and member in thy Church. And all the glory and honour will we ascribe unto God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

Amen.⁴⁴

44. Orson Hyde to Parley P. Pratt, November 22, 1841, Alexandria, in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 11 (April 1, 1842): 739–41.

Having pronounced this dedication, Hyde left the city around noon the following day. After his long and arduous journey, the time Hyde actually spent in Jerusalem was remarkably brief: he first saw Jerusalem on a Thursday (October 21, 1841), met with Protestant missionaries (Whiting, Sherman, and Gager) on Saturday, dedicated the Holy Land on the Mount of Olives on Sunday, and departed Jerusalem to begin his journey home on Monday.

On leaving, Hyde traveled in company with Gager, who was returning to his home in Norwich, Connecticut. En route, Gager took ill with typhus. Hyde reported, "I waited and tended upon him as well as our circumstances would allow; and when we landed at Bulack [Bulaq/Boulaq, Egypt], I got four men to take him to the American consul's, in Cairo, on a litter; I also took all his baggage there, and assisted in putting him upon a good bed—employed a good faithful Arabian nurse, and the English doctor."⁴⁵ Gager died within hours of their arrival at the hospital.⁴⁶

Hyde continued traveling to Trieste, Italy, by way of Alexandria, Egypt, then over the Alps and back to Regensburg, Bavaria. He was determined to publish the story of the Restoration in German.⁴⁷ In a letter to his wife, Marinda, he explained,

I feel quite anxious to get our faith and principles in print in the German language; but what the effect will be, time must determine. The Catholic religion in Germany is fortified by long and deep rooted prejudices; and to a certain extent by laws of human enactment. I have dreamed that they shut me up in prison: but if they do, I shall not have the honor of being the first Latter-Day Saint, who for the truth's sake, has been imprisoned. . . . I feel glad, and more than glad that I have seen Jerusalem. Face never answered more correctly to face in water, than Mt. Olivet did to the vision I had in Nauvoo. . . .

May the Lord bless you all, and save you from the violence of men, and from all evil. My kind respects to the Presidency, and to all that enquire after me. I am as ever your affectionate husband.⁴⁸

More than a year passed before Elder Hyde returned to his family in December 1842. He arrived in the middle of winter, having walked the

45. Hyde to Pratt, November 22, 1841, 739.

46. Hyde to Pratt, November 22, 1841, 739.

47. Hyde to Pratt, November 22, 1841, 741.

48. Orson Hyde to Marinda Hyde, December 21, 1841, Trieste, Italy, in *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 13 (May 2, 1842): 777.

one hundred and eighty-five miles from St. Louis to Nauvoo to greet his wife and two young daughters.⁴⁹ In fulfilling his mission to the Holy Land, he had traveled just under twenty thousand miles and was gone for thirty-two months.⁵⁰

Jerusalem and the Restored Church, 1842–1984: A Brief Review

More than three decades passed before any other Church leaders would visit the Holy Land. However, between 1873 and 1933, eight presiding authorities of the Church traveled to Jerusalem as members of either the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles or the First Presidency: Albert Carington, Lorenzo Snow, George A. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, Francis M. Lyman, David O. McKay, James E. Talmage, and John A. Widtsoe.⁵¹ All went with the same purpose as that of Elder Hyde: to offer up special prayers for the gathering of scattered Israel.

Their visits, of course, would not be the end of it. The number of Latter-day Saints traveling to the Middle East grew dramatically after Elder Spencer W. Kimball visited the Holy Land in 1960.⁵² At the April 1961 general conference, Kimball devoted his entire talk to telling the Saints about his trip to the Holy Land.⁵³ Within a couple of years, BYU's Department of Travel Study sought authorization from the Board of Trustees to begin a program in Jerusalem. The matter was referred to the First Presidency. President David O. McKay approved the request with

49. He arrived on December 8, 1842. The ship he had taken from Liverpool ported in St. Louis because of too much ice on the Mississippi River.

50. Estimating how far Hyde travelled is difficult at best. Whenever possible, he took advantage of water routes. The meandering course of rivers adds considerably to the overall distance he traveled. The known water routes Hyde utilized include the following: Miami-Erie Canal, Ohio River, Alleghany River, Delaware River, Susquehanna River, Atlantic Ocean, Rhine River, Main River, Danube River, Black Sea, Sea of Marmara, Dardanelles, Aegean Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Nile River (different branches in the Nile Delta), Ionian Sea, Adriatic Sea, English Channel, the Atlantic Ocean again, and the Mississippi River.

51. See Blair G. Van Dyke and LaMar C. Berrett, "In the Footsteps of Orson Hyde: Subsequent Dedications of the Holy Land," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 1 (2008): 57–93. Beginning with the 1873 group, women also participated, such as Eliza R. Snow and Clara Little.

52. For details of Spencer W. Kimball's visit to Jerusalem, see Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), 331.

53. Spencer W. Kimball, in *One Hundred Thirty-First Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961), 77–81.



Jerusalem at night, August 2016. Photograph by David M. Whitchurch. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

a provision that the program be balanced between Arab and Jewish territory.⁵⁴ That proviso continues to this day.

In 1968, under the direction of Daniel H. Ludlow, dean of Religious Education, twenty students and two faculty members (LaMar C. Berrett and Ellis T. Rasmussen) inaugurated the Jerusalem study abroad program.⁵⁵ The program started small with an average of approximately one hundred sixty students per year.⁵⁶ As it grew, so did the number of Church leaders who traveled to the Holy Land, including N. Eldon Tanner (1971), Hugh B. Brown (1971), Harold B. Lee (1972), Gordon B. Hinckley (1972), Howard W. Hunter (1972), Neal A. Maxwell (1972),⁵⁷ and James E. Faust (early 1980s).

The academic offerings of the program focused on biblical and contemporary studies that were correlated with a study of archaeology, biblical geography, Near Eastern history, Judaism, Islam, Near Eastern

54. *The World Is Our Campus*, 256, unpublished document for internal use by the Division of Continuing Education. See also *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, ed. Ernest L. Wilkinson and Leonard J. Arrington, 4 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), 3:723–24.

55. The study abroad program was delayed because of the 1967 Six-Day War.

56. Michael White, “BYU Leases Land in Jerusalem as Site for a Studies Center,” *Deseret News*, May 25, 1984, B7.

57. Neal A. Maxwell was commissioner of the Church Educational System at the time.

languages, and international relations and politics, much as it is today. Studies were, and still are, enhanced with weekly field trips to biblical and historical sites in the Holy Land, including extended study tours that took the students to Jordan and Egypt.⁵⁸

Due to the Church's expanding presence in Jerusalem, the mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, became acquainted with members of the Church, and during the mid-1970s, he contacted Church leaders in Salt Lake City to see if they were interested in developing a five-acre property on the Mount of Olives. He recommended it be named after Orson Hyde. President Spencer W. Kimball took immediate action. The needed funds were raised through donations, and the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden was dedicated by President Kimball on October 24, 1979, 138 years to the day after Elder Hyde's prayer on the Mount of Olives. In addition to President Kimball, his counselor N. Eldon Tanner and six Apostles attended the dedication, along with nearly two thousand members of the Church.⁵⁹

As the BYU study abroad program continued to grow, a search for property was approved. Elder Howard W. Hunter made six trips to the Holy Land in 1979. The day before the dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden, he went to see some twenty-six possible land sites. From those, he selected seven or eight to show President Kimball. The eventual site of the Center on Mount Scopus was not on the list.⁶⁰ Others on the program today will address what happened next.

Let me conclude with a personal comment. My first trip to the Holy Land was in the summer of 1984. I was a young seminary teacher participating in the "Lands of the Scriptures" workshop, and my wife and I were taken with other participants to a spot just below Hebrew University to view the Old City of Jerusalem. After pointing out the city's landmarks, our tour leaders—Paul H. Peterson and Karl S. Farnsworth—told us that we were standing on the site where Brigham Young University

58. David B. Galbraith, "Jerusalem, Center for Near Eastern Studies," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:225–26. The student trip to Egypt was discontinued in 2011 following the outbreak of the revolution at Tahrir Square in Cairo. In its place was a trip to Turkey.

59. In addition to President Kimball, those present at the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden's dedication included N. Eldon Tanner, Howard W. Hunter, Ezra Taft Benson, LeGrand Richards, Marvin J. Ashton, and Eldred G. Smith.

60. Alan R. Casper, "Opposition to the Construction of the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2003), 13. In addition, see remarks given elsewhere in this conference.

would build its Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. I knew little about the sacrifices, the heartaches, or the impossibilities involved in acquiring the land. Nor did I know anything of the miraculous events that would allow, in less than two months' time, construction to begin on that glorious building. What I did know, or should say felt, as I stood there that warm summer afternoon, was that Jerusalem was a city with a long past and a divine future. Somehow, like so many here today, I felt connected!

From time immemorial, Jerusalem has managed to be the epicenter of religious, political, and cultural conflict. As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, we know through prophetic statements that ultimately these conflicts must cease and that Jerusalem will fulfill its destiny as a city of peace. Isaiah described it well: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isa. 52:1).

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Outside Perspectives

Amber Taylor

I think most of us are familiar with a recent trend in storytelling to revisit and tell a traditional tale from the perspective of the antagonist. The live-action Disney movie *Maleficent*, for example, provides an empathetic backstory to the terrifyingly evil, but otherwise flat, character of Maleficent in the iconic animated version of *Sleeping Beauty*. The popular musical *Wicked*, by Stephen Schwartz, does the same with the character Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*. Even children's books have gotten in on the postmodern storytelling action. In *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, Alexander T. Wolf tells his side of the story, in which he explains that a simple sneeze and the need to borrow a cup of sugar to make Grannie a birthday cake have been misunderstood and blown way out of proportion, leading to the erroneous conclusion that he is the bad guy.

It is my aim here to do something similar: I hope to explore the story of the creation of the BYU Jerusalem Center from the perspective of those usually seen as the antagonists. But I also hope to bring out the voices of others, perhaps not antagonists so much as interested but confused onlookers and even firm supporters but, nonetheless, voices we don't hear from nearly as often.

I begin with some context. To talk about outside views of the Center's construction is to attempt to understand a controversy in Israeli society that burned hot and bright for a few years in the mid-1980s. Like many issues relating to religious versus state authority in Israeli society, the question of whether to allow a university affiliated with a non-Jewish, arguably Christian, passionately mission-oriented Church

to build a study and worship center in the very *heart* of Judaism, on one of the most coveted parcels of land in the world (one which overlooks Judaism's most holy sites), was a hotly debated issue.¹ And, as is generally the case in Israeli political controversies dealing with religion in a presumably democratic (albeit Jewish) state, it was the ultra-Orthodox fanning the flames, before the issue burned itself out and the activists moved on to other causes *du jour* demanding their attention.²

The public outcry that accompanied the Center's creation for most of its construction period was indeed loud and heated, even if it was relatively short-lived. Some context for that debate can help explain why it happened at all, and why it was so heated. Israel, and Jerusalem in particular, has become highly accustomed, perhaps even inured, to an almost constant stream of heated political debates about how *Jewish* Israel and its most sacred city should be, or even about what *Jewishness* is, and what *sacred* means in a city that houses some of the holiest sites of three of the world's largest religions.³ Then, of course, how to *maintain* whatever sacredness one feels is crucial to Jerusalem's welfare—which, many feel, is central to the welfare of the entire world—takes the debate even further. Thus, the fate of Jerusalem and who or what belongs in it is an issue about which a great many of the world's people—nations

1. For a more thorough treatment of the debate and its implications, see my dissertation, "Contest and Controversy in the Creation of the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center" (Brandeis University, 2019).

2. For a thorough treatment of ultra-Orthodox (*haredi*) Jews and their political activism in Jerusalem, see Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Note that although I refer to this group of fervently religious Jews as "ultra-Orthodox" here for the purpose of accessibility to readers less familiar with Israeli society, members of this group prefer the term *haredi*, a Hebrew term that indicates their anxiousness to fulfill the word of God.

3. These questions, and countless others relating to the nature of the Jewish state, are the subjects of a great deal of scholarly attention—much more than I can include here. But for some introductory reading, see the following. On attempts to define *Jewishness*, see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). On questions of Judaism in Israel, see Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2004). On contested narratives of Jerusalem and its meaning for differing groups of Jerusalemites, see Dana Hercbergs, *Overlooking the Border: Narratives of Divided Jerusalem* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2018); and Hillel Cohen, "The Temple Mount/al-Aqsa in Zionist and Palestinian National Consciousness: A Comparative View," in *Israel Studies Review* 2, no. 1 (Summer 2017): 1–19. Finally, on the role protests play in Israeli political action, see Gadi Wolfsfeld, *The Politics of Provocation: Participation and Protest in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).



Sign at the entrance of the Jerusalem Center. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

and governments, communities and religious groups—have strong and disparate opinions. In Israel, these debates happen at every level—in neighborhoods between neighbors and friends and among various strands of Jewish and Palestinian society, not to mention others, such as Orthodox or Armenian Christian residents of Jerusalem, who also have a vested interest. And they are always prominent in Israeli politics, at the local level in Jerusalem’s municipal meetings between religious and nonreligious Jews, with a frequent splash of Palestinian frustration added to the mix, and at the level of national government as well. Those even moderately familiar with Israeli society and politics know that the list of issues being hotly debated is nearly endless, and their frequency in public discourse nearly constant.

As a consequence, when the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in Jerusalem, and then more broadly throughout Israel, sounded an alarm over what quickly became known as the “Mormon University” on Mount Scopus, public opinion quickly settled along the usual lines of division. However, instead of simply describing Israeli society and politics (a feat that would require at least a semester and, for many, even years of study in a PhD program), I am going to attempt to let those with

a stake in the question of whether the “Mormon University” should be completed speak for themselves—at least as much as I am able to, not being a member of any of these communities.

Let me begin by telling the story from the perspective of those whose voices received little publicity during the controversy. The most obvious of these would be the local Palestinians living in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, where the Center resides.

A woman who lived in the neighborhood at the time, Malak Sharaf, spoke with me about her experience.⁴ She and her neighbors had noticed the building going up and initially wondered if it was an Israeli institution. This worried them, since they had repeatedly lost land to the Israeli government since the 1948 war in which Jews acquired a state but Palestinians were notably left stateless. Malak’s family, for instance, had lost all their land in Haifa and Jaffa. Were her neighbors now going to lose this local land to the Jewish state as well?

However, soon she and her neighbors learned it was a foreign institution that was building, which eased their fears a bit and also piqued their curiosity. Were the Israelis really going to allow a non-Jewish institution to build in Jerusalem? Most had no idea which institution was constructing this building. But Malak’s neighbor, who was Christian, told her they were Mormons and that they were bad people. But Malak was curious, attributing the dislike of the Mormons to her friend’s religious zeal. Also, a family friend had connections with the Center, and before long she had been offered a job there, which she enjoyed for many years.

Most people in the local Arab community, she explained, were simply curious about this big, beautiful building going up in their neighborhood. To be sure, a few articles in local Arabic newspapers raised alarm, emphasizing the Latter-day Saint affinity for Jews and Jewish perspectives on the conflict.⁵ These seem to have not been especially common. But, as Malak explained, as local residents got to know the staff and students affiliated with the Center, they began to like them more and more. The students were courteous and kind, and the Center employed Arabs as often as it did Jews. By the time the Center was in full operation, local Palestinians generally viewed the building and the students attending there quite favorably.

4. Conversation with Malak Sharaf, January 1, 2018, used with permission.

5. See, for example, “Mormons Planing [*sic*] Church Center on Confiscated Land,” *Al-Fajr*, September 14, 1984, 9, accessed from the David Galbraith file, box 8, folder 2B, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

As noted earlier, local Christians—Arab and otherwise—*were* concerned, but in truth Christian sentiment was mixed. Local Arab Christians initially knew little about the church behind the building, but many of their leaders were in close contact with missionaries and other international Christian organizations who had some experience with the Latter-day Saints, and these warned their fellow religionists in Jerusalem to avoid the Mormons. They likely did not want Latter-day Saints to interfere with their own ongoing missionary work, and as part of this, they needed to be sure the Israeli public understood that they were not affiliated with the Mormons. Christian leaders from eight local denominations explained this in a press conference in July 1985, repeating a refrain with which Latter-day Saints were all too familiar: “Mormons,” they insisted, “are not Christians.”⁶

Although Christian perspectives are more difficult to find, I would speculate that their frustration was with more than simply Jewish confusion of Latter-day Saints with what they saw as true Christianity. Just a few years earlier, a historic building belonging to the Baptist Church in Jerusalem had been burned to the ground by arsonists opposed to their missionary efforts.⁷ The next year, a hotel in Tiberias that was hosting Christian meetings was also set aflame.⁸ The Baptist Church took more than ten years to rebuild, and other Christian efforts to build in Jerusalem had equally been thwarted to this point, including a hotel intended to provide accommodations for service volunteers and tourists. The building effort in Gilo, in the southern part of Jerusalem, was soundly crushed by ultra-Orthodox Jewish opposition to what they saw as efforts to create a missionary center.⁹ Indeed, for several years afterward, the empty shell of the uncompleted hotel stood as a testament to the power of Jewish opposition to any outside Christian efforts to gain a foothold in the city.

And now these Christian leaders watched as the Latter-day Saints faced the same concerted opposition. On the one hand, if the Center was successfully completed, perhaps it demonstrated an opening for other outside groups to build. This would be significant, because no

6. Haim Shapiro, “Jerusalem Official Dismisses Mormon ‘Bribe Hint,’” *Jerusalem Post*, July 10, 1985; see also “Letter to the Editor” from Rev. Charles M. Kopp, United Christian Council in Jerusalem, *Jerusalem Post*, August 3, 1985.

7. Robert Rosenberg, “Jerusalem Authorities Concerned by Mounting Attacks on Christians,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 23, 1981, 3.

8. Haim Shapiro and Menachem Horowitz, “Two Men Arrested in Tiberias Hotel Fire,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 27, 1983.

9. See Taylor, “Contest and Controversy,” 90–91.

Christian structure had been built in Jerusalem since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. On the other hand, Christian groups who disliked the Latter-day Saints almost certainly chafed at the idea that they might be the ones to do what Christians with more history in the city had been unable to. Articles in Christian newspapers and periodicals reporting on events in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in this period offered both perspectives, although mention of the BYU Center was actually fairly infrequent.¹⁰

The real energy came from Jewish citizens of Israel—both those who favored the BYU project and those who passionately opposed it. To understand why some firmly supported the creation of the BYU Jerusalem Center and others so ardently opposed it, some history is required. For the most part, the Center's opponents were Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews, although they were joined by a few secular but nationalist Jewish Israelis. Those supporting the Center's creation, or at least the right of the Latter-day Saints, as much as anyone else, to build in the Holy City tended to be secular and from a more liberal Jewish tradition.

This divide is centuries old and particularly bitter in Israel. Keep in mind that in explaining this divide, I am greatly simplifying what is a rich and diverse Jewish history. Orthodox, who often refer to themselves as *datim*, or religious, and ultra-Orthodox Jews, who refer to themselves as *haredim*, or those who fear God's word, believe that preserving Jerusalem's holiness, as they see it, is not only their manifest duty to God but is vital to warding off calamity if that holiness is lost. Unholy people and actions in this holiest of cities threaten to bring the wrath of God upon the entire world. Thus, the ultra-Orthodox *haredim*, who see themselves as the protectors of God's holy word in the Torah and of the Holy City itself, rally to any call to protect the holy city against unholy influences. *Haredim* are only a small fraction of Israel's population (although their percentages are much higher in Jerusalem), yet their political influence vastly outweighs their numbers, for a whole host of reasons impossible to delve into here.

Secular Jews, or *hilonim*, as well as more liberal religious Jews in Israel generally come from a very different Jewish tradition. This tradition is every bit as Jewish but leads them to view the world and their

10. See Taylor, "Contest and Controversy," 184–85. For an example of the kinds of Christian publications on the controversy over the BYU Jerusalem Center, see Thomas Idinopulos, "Mormon-Jewish Turmoil in Zion," *Christian Century* 102 (December 1985), 123–26.

own place in it differently from the *datim and haredim*. For them (and remember this is a simplification), Judaism's contribution to the world is not so much in preserving holiness but in helping to heal a broken world through positive action. Thus, this tradition tends to be more progressively oriented and to favor a plurality of religious experience, rather than keeping out threatening, unholy influences.

Two key figures in Jerusalem during this period essentially epitomize these two perspectives and how they interact in Israel. Rabbi Menachem Porush came from one of the most prominent religious families in Jerusalem. He was among the most powerful religious figures in the *haredi* community and likewise wielded a great deal of political influence.¹¹ He almost certainly considered Jerusalem's secular, pluralistic mayor, Teddy Kollek, to be his archnemesis. Kollek was raised in Vienna in a family that, although secular, maintained a strong Jewish identity. He envisioned Jerusalem as a cosmopolitan, pluralistic city. He wanted all religions to have a place there, as he saw this essential to ensuring that the world's powers would be inclined to support Israel and its claim to Jerusalem.¹²

Both men had occasion to talk with Latter-day Saint leaders, and the conversations were telling of how they viewed the Church, the BYU Center it was working to build, and the role this all played in the ongoing battle over the character of Jerusalem. In 1972, President Harold B. Lee visited Jerusalem, and while there he met with Mayor Kollek. Having learned of the mission of Orson Hyde in 1841 to dedicate Palestine for the return of the Jewish people and being an expert in forging relations with potential allies, Mayor Kollek joked with President Lee, "You know, we Jews wouldn't be here if it weren't for Mr. Orson Hyde and his prayer on the Mount of Olives."¹³ Twenty years later, speaking on a more serious note to BYU Jerusalem students at a function in 1992, Kollek commented on the difficult struggle he had waged to overcome the opposition to the Center and allow the Church to complete the building, a struggle which

11. For more on Porush and his influence in Jerusalem politics, see Friedland and Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem*.

12. Kollek described his vision and his reasoning on dozens of occasions, recorded in various places. For an example, see his book, co-authored with Shulamith Eisner, *My Jerusalem: Twelve Walks in the World's Holiest City* (New York: Summit Books, 1990), 128. He also gives a clear account of his effort to prevent division or internationalization of the city in "Jerusalem," *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 4 (1977): 701–16.

13. LaMar C. Berrett and Blair G. Van Dyke, *Holy Lands: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Near East* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 370–72.

he described as “perhaps the most difficult and certainly among the most important” in his “25 years as mayor.”¹⁴ To the students he explained that it “was not a struggle for the Mormons, but rather . . . for tolerance in a city that should set an example to the world . . . in which everyone may pray to his God in his way without restriction.”¹⁵

Rabbi Porush’s vision of both the city and the BYU Jerusalem Center differed starkly from Kollek’s. In an effort to halt construction of the Center, Porush joined with other Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox leaders in calling for a campaign of opposition—a campaign which, as I noted at the beginning, was merely one in a steady stream of ultra-Orthodox efforts to protect Jerusalem and Judaism from what they view as harmful influences. On several occasions between 1984 and 1987, tens of thousands of *haredi* Jews flocked to sites in Jerusalem that had been designated for protest. In July 1985, the Western Wall was flooded with men in black who arrived to participate in a sit-in rally in which they prayed and heard speeches condemning the building of the Center.¹⁶ Added to these large rallies was the almost constant presence of a small group of protestors at the building site itself as well as personal threats to Latter-day Saints living in Jerusalem, such as David Galbraith and D. Kelly Ogden, who were helping to coordinate the building effort.¹⁷ They, more than anyone else, bore the direct brunt of the often virulent opposition.

While the perceived Mormon threat served as a useful political tool uniting religious Jews behind a clear and simple cause, the concerns of the *haredi* leaders were, I think, genuine and based on a history and worldview that most non-Jews simply do not understand. It came from a Jewish collective memory, two thousand years in the making, of Christian persecution and abuse. In this history, when Christians failed to convert Jews, they often simply killed them or drove them from their homes.¹⁸ And for Jews, conversion amounted to death anyhow, since

14. D. Kelly Ogden, *Pioneering the East* (self-published, 2002), 293. Kollek also expressed his gratefulness that the Church had not given up on the project and “desert[ed him]” when it became so difficult. “I am grateful that you stood with us.” Ogden, *Pioneering the East*, 294.

15. Ogden, *Pioneering the East*, 293.

16. Friedland and Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem*, 485. These protests often made international news. See, for example, “Mormon Center Opposed: Chief Rabbis Want Construction Halted on Mount of Olives,” *Washington Post*, July 20, 1985.

17. For more on this, see Taylor, “Contest and Controversy,” chap. 4: “Politics, as Usual.”

18. Israeli relations with the outside Christian world are a subject greatly underresearched, particularly in English publications. However, for a treatment of Israeli-Vatican

either way it meant the loss of a Jew, even if that loss was, to the Christian mind, not a loss at all but the ultimate gain.¹⁹ Whereas in the view of most Christian authorities throughout history, a converted Jew was still a Jew (a reality painfully highlighted when many Jewish Christians joined their nonconverted kinsfolk in Nazi concentration camps), for Jews, conversion removes one from Judaism—religion and community—altogether. What is more, this was taking place in 1985, a mere forty years after the end of World War II and the slaughter of a third of world Jewry. The memory of this incomprehensible loss was still very fresh, and the idea of losing more Jews, even if it was only to conversion, elicited, and still elicits, a visceral fight-or-flight reaction to a distinct threat—perceived or real.

Rabbi Porush attempted to communicate the basis of this reactionary fear to Latter-day Saint leadership. In July 1985, he met with Elders Howard W. Hunter and James E. Faust in Jerusalem, and both parties hoped to convince the other to retreat. Porush, leaning into the Jewish collective memory noted above, was unable or unwilling to believe that the Latter-day Saints held no secret missionary intentions. He had become familiar with Latter-day Saint missionary training manuals oriented specifically for missionaries who might teach Jewish investigators as well as early documents discussing the possibility of the Center as a visitors' center that might serve indirect missionary purposes. Even more, he had been assured by ex-Mormon activists such as Ed Decker that Latter-day Saints could never be trusted not to proselytize. With this at the forefront of his conversation, he pled with the Apostles, "Please have mercy and stop the construction!" He was equally distressed about the location of the building itself. "The Mormons had chosen 'to build on such a sacred place—Mount Scopus.'" Porush claimed that this was "'the heart and soul of the Jewish people.' They simply '[could] not tolerate [the Mormon] Center on this sacred ground overlooking the Temple Mount.'"²⁰

relations in Israel's early history, see Uri Bialer, *Cross on the Star of David: The Christian World in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1967* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

19. For more on historic Jewish-Christian relations more generally, see Stanley E. Porter and Brook W. R. Pearson, eds., *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries* (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

20. Taylor, "Contest and Controversy," chap. 3: "Persuasion, Prayer, and War." Notes taken at the meeting by David Galbraith, from his personal notes. I accessed a copy of the transcript in the Truman G. Madsen files. Some of the conversation was also

These concerns, widely publicized and amplified in ultra-Orthodox media and political discourse, were the basis for the passionate opposition. They were exemplified in a pop song that contributed to the rise to stardom of a young Hassidic singer, Mordechai Ben-David, in the Orthodox Jewish world.²¹ The catchy song, first sung in 1986 at the last of the major opposition rallies, has now, strangely enough, become commonplace in religious Jewish celebrations, such as bar mitzvahs and weddings. Yet most forget the song's origins, despite the fact that the lyrics are rather pointed in their meaning. Note that they illustrate the perspective almost point by point—the fear of missionary activity, the sense of the threat to Jerusalem's sacredness this supposedly idolatrous building represented, and the fight-or-flight (in this case, strongly fight) reaction to these fears.

Consider then Ben-David's "Yerushalaim Is Not for Sale."²² The most striking lyrics come at the beginning of the song:

Overnight—a massive construction
 Atop our Jerusalem mountains.
 A campus luring innocent souls,
 To drink from the forbidden fountains.
 Like many before,
 They've come here for war,
 We're warning them now; it won't pay.

Jerusalem; her holiness crying
 Defiling her dearest location,
 Politics blinding sense of pride.
 Are we not the Chosen Nation?
 Together as one,
 We will overcome,
 Bringing her freedom today.

CHORUS:

Yerushalaim is not for sale
 Voices crying,
 Thundering throughout the cities.
 You better run for your life,
 Back to Utah overnight,
 Before the mountain tops open wide

recorded in an Orthodox newspaper, Menachem Porush, "No Results from Meetings with Mormons," *Jewish Press*, September 12, 1985.

21. Taylor, "Contest and Controversy," 227.

22. The song can be heard and viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XiUREOUGpw>.

And swallow you inside.
Yerushalaim your foes will fail
Senseless trying
He's guarding His holy city,
He's punished all its intruders so awfully.
They have perished, their names are history.

The lyrics seem almost comical some thirty years after the release of the song, but they express with real sincerity the deep sense of threat and the need for these zealously religious protectors of Judaism's Jerusalem to rise up in its defense.

For both Kollek and Porush (and the communities and legacies they represent), the fight was not, as both pointed out in their conversations with Latter-day Saint leaders, simply about the Mormons. It was a heated battle in the long war in Jewish Israeli society over the meaning of Jerusalem and its place in the Jewish tradition and in the world. In the end, the ultra-Orthodox lost their campaign when their legal and political appeals found insufficient grounds on which to force BYU to abandon the nearly complete structure. In the spring of 1987, students quietly moved into the building, and in 1989, a small dedication ceremony marked the Center's completion and BYU's final victory.

Still, the ultra-Orthodox Jews and their campaign did win a small victory of their own. Latter-day Saint and BYU leadership, as part of the lease agreement, signed a "non-proselytization" agreement. This committed all students, faculty, and staff—anyone associated with the Center—to refrain from missionary efforts of any kind. And to my knowledge, as well as the knowledge of my friends and associates (Jewish, Palestinian, and others), this commitment has been kept admirably. To be sure, among the Latter-day Saints in Israel the agreement remains a sore point of their own intracommunal controversy. But that is a story for another conference.

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Eighth-floor hallway. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.



The Jerusalem Center with Christmas lights. Photograph by Nassif Asfour. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

The Lead-up to the Dedication of the Jerusalem Center

David B. Galbraith

I've been asked to focus on the construction period of the Jerusalem Center rather than the student program that, at this point in time, is the heart and soul of the Center. My wife, Frieda, and I lived for twenty years in Israel, where we also raised our family of five children. We were blessed to witness some marvelous miracles while living there, but none more marvelous than those that were intimately linked to the Center. I had the great opportunity to be personally involved with the story of the Center that follows here.

First, an introduction of key players in the Center's origins and construction is required. In the late 1970s, an executive committee to oversee the establishment of the Jerusalem Center was appointed by President Spencer W. Kimball consisting of Elder Howard W. Hunter, Elder James E. Faust, BYU President Jeffrey R. Holland, and his special assistant for Jerusalem, Robert C. Taylor.

It is always interesting to recognize *firsts*, such as President Harold B. Lee coming with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley to Jerusalem in 1972. President Lee was possibly the first prophet, seer, and revelator to visit the Holy Land in nearly two thousand years. Many General Authorities followed who were more involved than President Lee with the developments in that land leading to the Jerusalem Center. It would take volumes to do justice to their respective contributions, but out of all of them, President Gordon B. Hinckley was more involved with recommendations, approvals, and final decisions than any other.

It was not just General Authorities, however, who played essential roles. A brief overview such as this does an injustice to the literally

hundreds of individuals who go unnamed and whose contributions to the establishment of the Center were crucial. For example, there was the “visionary” role of Robert and Kathy Taylor (Robert was the head of BYU Travel Study) and the contribution of two former BYU vice presidents, Fred S. Schwendiman and Robert J. Smith, who were, respectively, responsible for the Center’s construction and finances.

In October 1979, while en route to the Holy Land to dedicate the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden, Elder Howard W. Hunter, with President Spencer W. Kimball by his side, officially announced the Church’s intention to build a BYU Center in Jerusalem. In so doing, they emphasized that this was to be a First Presidency project, which, in effect, placed the Jerusalem project outside all normal Church channels dealing with construction. So, in a nutshell, this is how a small BYU study abroad program in Jerusalem under the direction of Robert C. Taylor grew, in a relatively short time, beyond anyone’s expectations and outgrew every physical facility available in East or West Jerusalem that could accommodate it. The rapidly growing interest in the Holy Land among Church members was reflected not only in the growth of the BYU study abroad program designed for our students but also in the cultural and spiritual experiences Latter-day Saint adults outside of the program were having. It was this combined growth that sparked the vision of a possible center of our own. President N. Eldon Tanner noted that the 1970s would be regarded as the decade the members of the Church discovered the Holy Land, and the 1980s would be the decade the Holy Land discovered the Church.¹

The 1979 announcement to build a center in Jerusalem was all the more interesting in that the building site had yet to be selected (although detailed plans for a future center were well underway). As for the site, it was hoped that President Kimball’s visit would solve that problem. In anticipation of this extraordinary visit, a number of possible building sites had been selected to show President Kimball, in the hope that he would be inspired to choose one. The best of the many different possible plots was saved for last. President Kimball and his party were taken to various sites with everyone watching for any sign of approval for a particular site. There didn’t seem to be a flicker of interest revealed by the prophet in any of them until the last one. Interestingly enough, this last one was on Mount Scopus, a northern extension of the Mount of

1. Personal communication with the author.

Olives. As impressive as this plot of ground was, it did not command a spectacular view of the Old City of Jerusalem because of an intervening hill. So President Kimball's whole party was encouraged to walk north over rocks, thorns, and thistles toward a large empty field. With each step, a panorama opened up with a magnificent view of the Old City, the Kidron Valley, the Temple Mount, East Jerusalem, and on the horizon, West Jerusalem. After a few minutes of visiting and admiring the view, President Tanner, a member of the First Presidency accompanying President Kimball, called for a vote. The first hand up was the Prophet's, followed by everyone else's, of course. There was, however, one minor drawback: the land was held by the Israel Lands Authority and was not for sale.

The curious thing was that President Tanner, who knew that this piece of land was not a candidate because its ownership had been explained to him the day before, called for the vote. Despite this, since the vote was unanimous, for all intents and purposes the site on which everyone was standing had been chosen as the site for the Center, and we could all get on with our work. But there remained one tiny omission: no one had asked the owner! Every contractor and real estate agent in Jerusalem had their eyes on that property, and there had been many attempts to acquire it from the Lands Authority, but to no avail. In addition to being held by the Lands Authority, the land was green zoned, meaning that no construction would be permitted on the site. So at the time, we felt that President Kimball's choice was really no closer to identifying a site than before he had arrived. As everyone left town it was decided to keep looking for an alternative site. We did, of course, raise the matter of the site selected by President Kimball with officials in the mayor's office and the Jerusalem municipality, but they all warned us away from *any site* on the Mount of Olives, with the observation that ever since the land in question had been expropriated many years ago, not a single application to have the zoning laws changed had been honored.

Then along comes a Christian organization—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—naively, guilelessly asking for an exception to build on the Mount of Olives where all others had failed. And can you even imagine, we got it! How? In April 1980, Elder Hunter and Elder Faust asked Robert P. Thorn and Arthur H. Nielsen, Salt Lake City attorneys who had assisted the Church in real estate matters, to act as consultants in the acquisition of property for the proposed Center. Thorn was a fast learner, and that's a necessary characteristic to master

the complexities of engaging in business transactions in the Near East, where bargaining and haggling are a fine art, and an individual's stature and prestige matter little if he cannot successfully negotiate to his advantage in the marketplace, be it for chickens, camels, or real estate. Thorn's instructions were to pursue the site that was voted on, while still looking for alternative sites. It seemed that the General Authorities were determined to get the chosen site. Thorn hit the ground running, and from the moment he arrived in Israel, he initiated plans to approach the Israel Lands Authority (which is the first and most important hurdle in acquiring land in Israel) with an offer they could *not* refuse.

It was recognized that if the Israel Lands Authority turned down our application for this site, there was little possibility of a successful appeal. After months of negotiation for this choice plot of ground, we received a very interesting challenge from the Lands Authority: namely, if we could demonstrate that what we wanted to build on the site was worthy of such a prestigious location, they would consider our request.

We found two architectural firms to help meet the challenge and retained Frank Ferguson in Salt Lake and David Reznik in Jerusalem. The two firms bonded into one and created one of the finest structures in Jerusalem and beyond. The cooperation, the harmony, the spiritually symbiotic relationship of these two firms led to the design of a magnificent edifice that was so compelling and so structurally powerful that it could take its place among the ancient and the modern structures in Jerusalem; and with the architectural renderings, we succeeded in convincing the Lands Authority that what we wanted to build on the site was indeed worthy of the site.

The next thing we needed was a prominent attorney to represent us in Israel—an individual who was known and respected in government and Jerusalem municipal circles. Of all the candidates we considered, Joseph Kokia stood out. It was felt he would command the greatest respect and enjoy a better standing before official bodies than any of the other candidates. Kokia had served as the Israeli director general of the Ministry of Justice for sixteen years and, to his professional credit, had survived four changes of government in Israel in the process. Can anyone doubt the divine assistance we received in retaining such a prominent lawyer? And heaven knew how desperately we would need him.

With everything falling into place, we now needed another miracle to help change the zoning of the site. There had been an enormous investment of money, time, and professional skills, and yet our whole project

appeared doomed to fail. From their own experiences, no Israeli held out any hope for our success in getting the zoning changed. Some even suggested that we had been allowed to come this far by various government agencies because each knew that the government would never change the green-zone designation and, hence, that our whole project would die on the vine. What they didn't know, and what they couldn't possibly understand, was that the project was a *First Presidency project* headed by two Apostles, Elders Hunter and Faust, and by BYU President Holland and, even more importantly, that it was the Lord's will.

In seeking a change in Jerusalem's zoning for the site so that we could build our proposed building, we were working with a number of unknowns, including these:

1. Public opinion regarding a Christian institution building on one of the most prominent sites in all Jerusalem.
2. The propriety of awarding property that had been expropriated by the Israeli government to a non-Jewish entity.
3. The controversial aspect of allowing space that had been green zoned for no construction to be converted to a zone not only for construction, but for the construction of an educational institution that could just as easily have been built elsewhere on less controversial land.
4. The nagging question in the minds of many Israelis as to whether or not this major controversial Christian project was in the Jewish public interest.

Little wonder that our friends held out absolutely no hope for our success and urged us to consider building elsewhere. The challenge of getting a change in the zoning included a provision in the law requiring that notice of the project be published in a government gazette and major newspapers to the effect that "any person interested in the land, the proposed building, or any other aspect of the planning, who considers himself aggrieved by the modification of the scheme . . . may within two months from the date of publication . . . lodge their objections thereto." This was the time when the Adversary could have stopped us cold in our tracks. There could have been literally dozens of objections, which would have taken us months to resolve, if ever. So where was the Adversary? Was he sleeping? I asked this facetiously, because beginning a few months after the deadline had passed, there were thousands

of objections to our Center, but they all came too late legally. So how many objections were there within the two-month period? Only two, and they were quickly resolved.

On March 31, 1982, Amnon Niv, the Jerusalem city engineer, a powerful and influential individual in the Jerusalem city government, called a meeting of the municipal town planners to deal with the matter of the green zone as it related to our proposed project. A huge colored map of the Mount of Olives, prepared by our architect David Reznik with our project superimposed on top of it, was unfolded. The town planners in the meeting argued back and forth regarding alternative sites. Niv listened with growing impatience to the arguments and then called for a colored felt pen. Sizing up the proposed project with his eye and taking into consideration the contours of the steep hill, he freehanded a colored line across the map and announced, "This is the building line." Those of us in attendance looked on with amazement and could hardly believe what had just happened before our very eyes. And then with a voice of authority, he loudly and firmly concluded his act and the discussion with the statement, "That's it," and walked out of the meeting. And that was it! Almost.

In January 1984, after months of negotiations to change the zoning, a Mr. Blank, an underling in the district committee but one who was feared by contractors and real-estate people alike because of his ability to hold up any project with which he took umbrage, surprised us with a pleasant official letter that read, "I am honored to advise you that your application for change of the town plan is officially approved and now has the status of law." We had beaten the odds, both in terms of obtaining one of the most prestigious, priceless sites in the city and also in an unheard-of short period of time, at least in Israel, in obtaining zoning that would permit construction of a building on the site.

About this time, concern arose in other government ministries that antiquities would almost certainly be uncovered in the excavation for the seven floors of the Center in the mountainside. This was a surprise for which we were not prepared. The details came in the form of a letter from the District Archeology Authority advising us that the area on which we proposed to build had been designated an *antique site*. That meant that if in the process of excavation any ancient tombs or antiquities of any kind were discovered, all work, by law, must come to a stop until the Department of Antiquities could carry out a thorough investigation and decide on whether the site must be preserved. Because the site where the Center was to be built received the designation of an "antique site," it also meant

that an expert from the Department of Antiquities had to be on hand at all times during excavations to ensure that no antiquities were harmed or destroyed. Given the fact that many tombs had been found nearby during the building of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the experts believed that our site might well have been a Second Temple cemetery. If so, it would be deemed a *national treasure*, which would have trumped any construction on the site. One can imagine our relief that no tombs or antiquities of any kind came to light during the excavation phase of construction.

In spite of our progress, all was not well. We were running into trouble with those who were opposed to us. By December 1985, the opposition to the Center had become so politically (and socially) powerful that the government of Israel was about to fall from a vote of no confidence. It was then that we decided we needed an Israeli public relations firm to represent us. We chose a prestigious firm, headed by a Mr. Moshe Theumim. Only after we had retained him did we learn that he was an unpaid public relations advisor to the prime minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, and that it was his firm which had played a major role in helping Mr. Peres get elected.

You must be thinking, “Just a minute, are you saying that you not only found a public relations firm with a CEO who was willing to take on such a controversial project, but one who also, coincidentally, had the ear of the prime minister and met with him weekly to keep him abreast of his political standing in the state of Israel? Now, that is a miracle!” Perhaps we should have recognized it as a sign from heaven in keeping with the incredible opposition awaiting us just around the corner. Not only was the Center becoming a major political issue, threatening the Israeli government, but also there was no one on either side of the aisle who was willing to commit political suicide by supporting the “Mormon” project. We desperately needed a public relations expert who could direct us through that political labyrinth. And we got it.

Prime Minister Peres, in the face of incredible opposition, pursued a plan to avoid a vote of no confidence against him and his government: a committee would be established, made up of eight government ministers who were some of the most polished, politically influential men in all the country. The committee would consist of four ministers in favor of the center and four ministers who were opposed. The brilliance of the plan was that the net effect of the equal division between supporters and opponents was that the committee was deadlocked on day one and stayed deadlocked until construction of the Center was nearly finished.

With the stroke of a pen, Peres had shifted this burdensome matter from his office to a moribund committee.

Even so, the opposition was far beyond our expectations in many ways. And in the course of it, one person stood out in his support for us: Abba Eban, who in the course of his distinguished career had served as Israel's foreign affairs minister, education minister, deputy prime minister, and ambassador to the United States and to the United Nations. He wrote an article in the *Jerusalem Post* in response to a harangue signed by ninety-six Israeli university faculty members who warned Israelis of the danger of a permanent Latter-day Saint presence in Israel. I deem it as something of a miracle because of the timing and because of the irrefutable logic that caught the attention of so many in Israel. He wrote,

If ever there was a prize for the most ludicrous document ever published since the invention of writing this one would be a hopeful candidate. The Jewish people, which preserved its identity against the conquering empires of antiquity, against the allurements of Hellenism, against the arrogance of classical Rome, against the conversionary triumphs of Christianity, against the proselyting fervor of Islam, against the savage torments of the Inquisition, against the seductions of emancipation and assimilation, is now about to disappear in its own country under the irresistible magnetism of the late Joseph Smith and the late Brigham Young. The sheer silliness of it all invites a tear for the departing glory of Israeli scholarship. The issue is not Mormon theology, but the principle of free exercise of conscience and dissent in a democratic society.²

Many Israelis were either laughing at Abba Eban's response to the so-called danger posed by the Mormons, as Latter-day Saints were then called, or they were moved upon to solemnly contemplate his logic.

On April 1, 1986, Arthur Nielsen was appointed "special counsel" for the Jerusalem Center to deal with proposed changes to the lease agreement between BYU and the Israeli government. The problem was that the demand for changes came from the Ultra-Orthodox who wanted more reassurances that the Center would not become a base for missionary work. Legally speaking, at this point, the lease document, which had already been agreed upon, was sacrosanct, but in the interest of community peace and harmony, Nielsen, a master wordsmith, reached an agreement with government attorneys for a "lease addendum" that we could live with, and one that satisfied almost all concerned. Nielsen

2. Abba Eban, *Jerusalem Post*, December 10, 1985.

was the right man at the right time, and, given the opposition he faced, his accomplishments were nothing short of a miracle.

There were four additional consequential events I want to at least mention. First, the United States Congress intervened on our behalf with a letter to the Israeli government signed by 154 Congresspeople on both sides of the aisle. We made 120 copies and sent them to each member of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) to ensure that they received their own personal letter to peruse.³ Additionally, we placed a copy of the letter in every newspaper in the country. That really got Israel's attention and went a long way in persuading all interested parties, especially fence sitters, of our bona fides in establishing a center in Jerusalem. Second, the Israeli attorney general, in a fifty-four-page document, refuted all the legal and political allegations made against us. This legal finding, which was an announcement to both friend and foe, was that we were a new and perfectly legal entity in their midst. Third, Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek publicly thanked us on several occasions for sticking with him in his struggle for tolerance in Jerusalem, a city that, he said, should be an example of tolerance to the whole world. For example, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed in Jerusalem in January 1993.⁴ On that occasion, Mayor Kollek took the opportunity to reflect on his relationship with "the Mormons," on the construction of BYU's Jerusalem Center and on religious tolerance. He remarked, in part,

Of all the struggles during my 25 years as mayor of Jerusalem, the one concerning the BYU–Mount Scopus campus was perhaps the most difficult and certainly among the most important. This was not a struggle for the Mormons but rather a struggle for tolerance in a city that should set an example to the world—a city in which everyone may pray to his God in his way without restriction. How could we Jews, who were cut off from our holy places for centuries, refuse the right of others to establish a legitimate educational institution and place of worship in Jerusalem?⁵

Lastly, Mayor Kollek was with us, or ahead of us, all the way from finding the land on which to build the Center to its dedication. It seems

3. For the text of the letter, see David B. Galbraith, D. Kelly Ogden, and Andrew C. Skinner, *Jerusalem: The Eternal City* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 465–66.

4. "Tabernacle Choir to Sing in Israel," *News of the Church*, accessed February 10, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1992/08/news-of-the-church/tabernacle-choir-to-sing-in-israel?lang=eng>.

5. Yair Rosenberg, "The Mormons on Mount Scopus," *Tablet*, accessed February 10, 2020, <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/190863/byu-jerusalem-campus>.

highly unlikely that we could have succeeded without his vigorous and open assistance. Undoubtedly raised up by the hand of the Lord “for such a time as this” (Esth. 4:14), this powerful man carefully guided us through a totally unfamiliar and, at times, unfriendly bureaucracy and led the charge, as it were, against the opposition. Everyone involved on the Church and university side recognized Kollek’s essential role. In acknowledging the assistance of Mayor Teddy Kollek, Elder James E. Faust declared that he was “one of the wisest, most durable politicians in the world.”⁶ And in August 2005, BYU President Rex E. Lee bestowed on Teddy an honorary doctorate “in recognition of his untiring and courageous service to his city, Jerusalem, to his country, and to the world, and for his steadfast support of the university and the church’s interests in Jerusalem.”⁷

Mayor Kollek saw in us not only an enduring friend of the state of Israel, but also a powerful partner with him in his goal to make Jerusalem an open city to Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The fact that we stuck with *him* through all the opposition was the very expression of appreciation we held for *his* efforts and, in the end, we won—together we won!

I conclude with the dedication of the Center by President Howard W. Hunter (then President of the Quorum of the Twelve). It was a quiet and intimate dedicatory service held on May 16, 1989, in the upper auditorium of the newly completed Center, with its breathtaking, sweeping panoramic view of Jerusalem. Participating in the program were President Hunter, Elder Thomas S. Monson, Elder Boyd K. Packer, President Holland, Robert C. Taylor, Robert J. Smith, Fred A. Schwendiman, Daniel H. Ludlow, and David B. Galbraith. Those who spoke praised those who had sacrificed so much, in a multitude of ways, to bring this miraculous building to fruition. Although a portion of the dedicatory prayer was specifically reserved for the building itself, the greater part was an outpouring of love and appreciation for the God of heaven and earth, for life itself, for the privilege of being born in this last dispensation of the fulness of times, and for the gift of his Son and his atoning sacrifice. Concerning the Center, President Hunter prayed,

6. James P. Bell, *In the Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 204.

7. Quoted in Carrie A. Moore, “Israel’s Kollek, a Friend to BYU, Dies,” *Deseret News*, January 3, 2007, accessed February 10, 2020, <https://www.deseret.com/2007/1/3/19994209/israel-s-kollek-a-friend-to-byu-dies>.

This building wherein we are seated has been constructed for the housing of those who would love Thee and seek to learn of Thee and follow in the footsteps of Thy Son, our Savior and Redeemer. It is beautiful in every respect, complying with all the beauty it represents. Oh, Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of building this house to those who will come here and be here for the benefit and learning of Thy sons and daughters. We pray, Father, that Thou wilt bless this house in every way. Bless the land on which it rests and the beautiful grounds. Bless its foundations. Bless the walls and roof and all its details.

We pray that it will be kept from damage or destruction from the hands of man or the ravages of nature and will remain beautiful and representative of that which is sacred and that which pertains to Thee. We, Thy children, therefore dedicate to Thee, Father, that which has been built by our hands in love, this beautiful building, the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, and all of its appurtenances, praying that it will be acceptable in every respect to Thee. May all who enter herein to teach, to learn, or for whatever purpose be blessed of Thee and feel Thy Spirit. This is our prayer and our dedication to Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.⁸

Who can know the full purpose for which this magnificent Center was built? No doubt President Hunter was blessed with that vision.

David B. Galbraith, who with his family lived in the Holy Land for twenty years (1969–1989), was hired by BYU’s Department of Continuing Education as the resident director of its Holy Land study abroad programs. He later led the search for land on which the Jerusalem Center was built. He was an integral part of the team that designed and monitored the construction of the Center. David was appointed as the Jerusalem Center’s first director when it opened to students in 1987. In 1989, he returned to BYU, where he taught political science and international relations until he retired in 2000.

8. As recorded in Fred A. Schwendiman, “The Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies,” compiled by Daryl Tichy, 1991; see also <http://fred-schwendiman.tripod.com/jerusalem-center/>.



View from the interior of the upper auditorium. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.



LRC gallery. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

The Jerusalem Center in the Community

From Suspicion and Distrust to Acceptance and Respect

Eran Hayet

It is great to be here with so many friends to celebrate this special event. When I first arrived at the Jerusalem Center in 1994 and assumed responsibility for, among other areas, the Center's security, I inherited from my predecessor a file with policies for how to deal with potential threats. Here are some of those policies:

Procedure to evacuate the building in case of a bomb threat

Procedure to deal with riots at the lower gate

Procedure to deal with ultra-Orthodox demonstrations at the upper gate

These were some of the challenges we had to deal with for years immediately after the opening of the Center. These rules indicated the uncertain status of the Church and Brigham Young University in Jerusalem for a long time after Mayor Teddy Kollek used his influence to obtain approval for a new home for BYU's study abroad program.

From its groundbreaking on August 21, 1984, the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies has attracted mixed feelings: a combination of sympathy, excitement, and curiosity alongside suspicion, distrust, and concern from different parts of the local communities—Israelis and Palestinians. In order to reduce opposition, mainly from Jewish ultra-Orthodox groups, BYU and the Church had contracted with Israel's leading PR firm, Gitam. For years, Gitam monitored the media, looking for mentions of the "Mormons," and produced frequent reports for the Center director.

I remember that in one of the weekly meetings (probably in the mid-'90s) I suggested we stop contracting with Gitam. I thought we had established enough connections to the local community, gained a good understanding of the Israeli and the Palestinian society and politics, and

developed sufficient tools to do our own monitoring and be ready to respond as needed.

Everyone wants to be liked and appreciated. In our case, however, our reputation directly impacts our security. This goes beyond the building itself; the security benefits of being known and respected accompany our students wherever they go. As a consequence, our institutional efforts as administrators and faculty are not enough. Our students are ambassadors; the way they behave, their interactions with locals, even the way they dress matters and helps us protect their safety and our good reputation. Our students are great.

What I have learned during my years as the executive director of the Jerusalem Center is that as long as we find ways to contribute to both communities—the Israeli and the Palestinian—and we do this with a low profile (with some exceptions), and as long as the nonproselytizing commitment is honored, we’ll avoid opposition and maintain our reputation as a friendly and a nonthreatening institution. Our guiding principle here is being actively neutral with regard to the current conflict. By “actively” I mean reaching out to both communities alike, and by “neutral” I don’t mean acting indifferent but expressing our love and care for both sides, without taking sides, being both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian. While this perhaps seems contradictory, it is possible if one focuses on the legitimate aspirations of both people. As I tell the students when they first land in Jerusalem, “The Jerusalem Center is located on the seam between the Palestinian and the Israeli communities of Jerusalem. It is a favored location, and we like to believe that we are a bridge between these two communities.”

So, beyond words, how does the BYU Jerusalem Center contribute to the people of Jerusalem? Let me describe some of the things we do.

We hire locally, both Palestinians and Israelis. We work hard to build good morale and good relationships among the employees. This is really a model for a harmonious workforce in a community that can be very polarized. We hope we are setting a good example.

Hiring local and diverse staff benefits both the Center and the workers: it provides stable employment opportunities in the neighborhood and fosters some deep connections and friendly attitudes toward the Center. Here’s a short story to illustrate this: One day our cameras spotted three young Palestinians, their faces covered, climbing the fence and up the roof, where they stuck a large Palestinian flag. Then they disappeared back into the neighborhood. While this was an act of defiance against the police and Israeli authorities and not a display of hostility

toward the Center, we didn't want to be involved in that "game." Within minutes, one of our security guards, a Palestinian who lives in the neighborhood, crossed the street, identified the young men (remember, their faces were covered), and had them climb back and remove the flag. It never happened again.

An important part of our outreach is our Sunday evening classical music series. Our wonderful program includes forty-four concerts a year. Also, once a month, on Thursday nights, we have programs with jazz, ethnic, and lighter music concerts. We feature top local musicians (some of them are world famous), and we also provide a stage for promising young local musicians. People from all over the country attend these popular (and free) concerts. Occasionally we have some distinguished guests. Recently a former minister of defense came with his family to a jazz concert.

Quoting some feedback we have received from our patrons, "Wishing you success in your wonderful work. It is a great asset to the community," and "I just heard about these concerts at the BYU Jerusalem Center from the folks I sat next to at the symphony this evening, and I would be grateful to be able to attend." Here's another one: "The jazz concert on 12 September was excellent. I left feeling upbeat and happy!"

The closing concert of the year is always our students' Christmas concert. It is not as professional as the other concerts, but our fall semester students work very hard, practicing between classes and field trips, and their charm has made this one of the most popular and fun concerts of our program.

The Center is open for tours. About seven thousand visitors come every year to visit the building. They watch an introductory video, listen to a brief organ recital overlooking the Old City, and tour the grounds. Many visitors comment on the peace they feel here.

Our concert coordinator told me that last week a woman came for a tour but sat by the entrance and did not want to watch our hosting video. When they asked her why, she said, "Oh, I've already seen it three times. I'm an architect from Tel Aviv, and every once in a while when I feel very stressed at work, I drive here just to come listen to the short organ recital, see the view, and relax. So, I'm sitting here waiting for the organ to start playing."

We hold art exhibits that rotate every six months and feature local Israeli and Palestinian artists. A couple of years ago, we hosted the opening event and the central exhibit of a Jerusalem art festival. One of our visitors was Nechama Rivlin, the First Lady of Israel (who recently

passed away). Following her visit, she posted the following review about the exhibit and the Center on the official presidential Facebook page:

Hello everyone and Happy Holidays,

We will dedicate the second candle of Chanukah, which we will light tonight, to an exhibition that is currently on display in Jerusalem. In a rare architectural structure on the slopes of Mount Scopus, designed by architects David Resnick and Frank Ferguson, lies the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies—or the Mormon University, as it is commonly referred to. This is a beautiful corner where you can view Jerusalem from every window, hall and balcony, and even attend a free concert every Sunday.

Since the end of October, the Jerusalem modern art festival, celebrating its tenth anniversary, has on display in the wonderful building this exciting exhibit. It is highly recommended.

We hold an annual Christmas tree lighting event. Last year about four hundred people attended a celebration of light and music, including students, our employees' families, people from the Christian community, and also Jewish and Muslim friends of the Center.

As part of our outreach to our neighbors, we have opened the Center to select events and organizations. For example, the a-Tur high school on the Mount of Olives regularly holds their graduation ceremonies in the auditorium. Two years ago, the board of trustees of the Hebrew University approached us and asked to hold their gala celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Hebrew University at the Jerusalem Center, rather than at their campus just above us. In addition, earlier this year we hosted another event sponsored by the Hebrew University—a concert for the 20th Congress of the International Association of Hispanists.

Over the years, the Jerusalem municipality, together with the Ministry of Education, has held numerous workshops and conferences for school principals and teachers in the Center. The former Mayor Nir Barakat attended some of them. Ayman Jebara is a former school principal, currently a director of a department in the Ministry of Education and a local part-time faculty member at the Center who teaches our students Arabic. Mr. Jebara tells me that the common feeling among his colleagues is that the Center, which was in the past estranged, has become a home for the East Jerusalem community in the most beautiful part of the city.

For the past thirty years, BYU has provided three full-ride scholarships per year to Palestinian students. Tawfic Alawi, the Center's associate director, and the academic associate director (currently Dr. Frank

Judd) interview and evaluate the candidates and choose some very bright young men and women who later graduate from BYU and in many cases develop successful careers back in their community.

The Center provides humanitarian aid, sometimes in partnership with LDS Charities, to programs like Helping Babies Breathe and the Neonatal Resuscitation Program and some independent initiatives. We have a volunteer couple who reaches out to different NGOs, dealing mostly with disabled and needy people. Every semester our students assemble 10,000–15,000 school or hygiene kits for distribution in the community.

In the past few years, we have shifted some of our efforts and funds to support extracurricular education and sports projects in the local community, including donating equipment to a taekwondo club and equipment to open new youth robotic centers. We also cosponsor and support the “Runners for Peace” annual race—a joint Israeli-Palestinian jogging group. We fund basic swimming lessons—or, better said, “how not to drown lessons”—for Palestinian kids in a pool in West Jerusalem (some of these kids are from a refugee camp in East Jerusalem). We’ve now held seven courses, and for me to visit the pool and help some of them adjust their goggles and to see the light in their eyes was a very special moment. At the end of each course, the kids come to the Center for a short ceremony. Some of you may know I have some personal interest in swimming; however, these are not just swimming lessons. For these kids, this is quality time combined with discipline and, more importantly, for some of them an alternative to being on the streets of some very problematic neighborhoods. These are just a few of our activities reaching out to the community in an effort to be good neighbors, good citizens, and good people.

I’m not naïve enough to think that we don’t have potential challenges. Occasionally we still encounter some suspicion and distrust, but as the following cases will show, we have the positive reputation and the needed connections and tools to deal with crisis situations when they occur.

Several years ago, we hosted a workshop for social workers. A few days before the event, the organizers told us that they might have to cancel since some of the participants were ultra-Orthodox women, who just realized that they would be coming to the “Mormon University.” We suggested that before they cancel, they check with their rabbis and ask their approval, which they did. The rabbis approved, and the workshop took place.

In 2009, we dealt with the only case that we know about where there was supposedly a breach of the nonproselyting agreement. This

was reported in a local newspaper by a rabbi, leader of an organization called Yad L'Achim, whose agenda is to monitor and fight missionary groups. This is the same organization that held the large demonstrations against the building of the Center and for which we had a specific security policy, as I mentioned in my opening. This rabbi claimed that one of the local Church members had been engaging in missionary activity. We contacted the rabbi and protested his aggressive approach but also assured him that the university and the Church were honoring their commitments. Soon afterward, we discovered that the Church's name had been removed from Yad L'Achim's long "watch list" of missionary groups. It's not that we need their approval, but it was good to finally remove this radical group from our list of challenges by simply honoring our commitments not to them but to the state of Israel.

And here is one last story from more recent days (September 10, 2018), this time from the Palestinian side. My day started with a WhatsApp message from Tawfic Alawi about a front-page headline on *Al Quds*, which is the leading Palestinian Arabic language newspaper in Jerusalem: "Settlers and Mormons Burst into Al-Aqsa Mosque." The first paragraph of the article elaborates that the Waqf (the Muslim entity that controls Al-Aqsa) reported that 230 settlers together with 72 "Mormons" burst into the Mosque compound under the leadership of ultra-right Israeli Minister of Agriculture Uri Ariel. The article went on to say that the Mormons have a center on the Mount of Olives. It also noted that one of the members of the group gave a bottle of wine as a gift to one of the policemen at the entrance, "thereby desecrating the holy place." The article also reported that the Waqf had sent a letter protesting the provocation by "the settlers and the Mormons" to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which nominally controls the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa compound.

Tawfic concluded his message to me, "DISASTER!"

I asked Tawfic to investigate, and he did. It turned out that a few of our students (probably seven or eight) visited the area that morning and were, without really knowing what was going on, in line with the settlers and an evangelical group, both led by the far-right minister of agriculture. The settler and evangelical group was boisterous, and at some point one of the local guards asked who they were, and the only response was from one of the students who said, "We're Mormons," thinking he was speaking only for the small group of students with him. With this innocent response, the entire evangelical group was labeled "the Mormons," and the provocative, political efforts of the group was associated with "the settlers and the Mormons."

Tawfic was able to fix this by contacting the reporter and publishing a clarification that we are not taking sides. Through his contacts, he also explained the misunderstanding to the head of the Waqf, who later sent a clarification to Jordan. Based on the reputation of the Center, there was sufficient goodwill that all of these people were willing to listen. This whole event ended in a positive way and resulted in establishing a closer relationship with the Waqf. For his contribution to the resolution of this incident, Tawfic received the exceptional performance award from BYU.

One final comment to conclude: this may sound like a cliché, but everyone who has been involved with the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, or has even just visited briefly, says that there's something special about this place, and they don't refer exclusively or primarily to its unique location.

We hear this repeatedly.

It is mostly about the spirit of the people: our local workers with their endless care and devotion, our volunteer couples who make every visitor feel like a VIP, our BYU faculty and students with their respectful approach to the people of Jerusalem. These have a huge impact on the community. This spirit is what brought us to where we are today: accepted and respected.

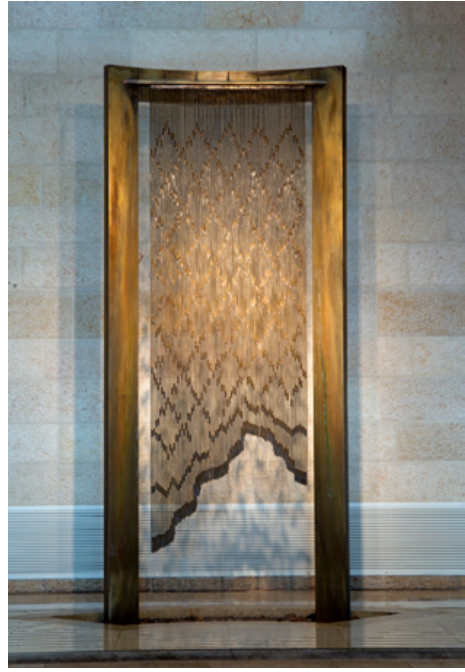
I believe, as I tell our students when they first arrive in Jerusalem, that today the Center is a very respected institution in Jerusalem (and actually in the whole Holy Land) with many good friends in both the Israeli and the Palestinian communities. I ask them to help me and my associates to be part of this ongoing effort.

On a more personal note, for more than twenty-five years I have been working under the remarkably savvy and insightful leadership of Dr. Jim Kearn and with many good people in Jerusalem and here in Provo. For that I'm very grateful.

Eran Hayet was born in 1964 and spent his early childhood in Kibbutz Ga'aton, in the northwest part of the Galilee. He lived in Chile from age seven to nine and Panama from age eleven to fifteen before returning to Jerusalem to complete high school. Following high school, Hayet served as an officer in the Israeli Air Force for five years and then studied international relations and Latin American studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. While at Hebrew University, he worked as a parliamentary aide at the Knesset. From 1990 to 1993, he was the spokesperson for the Peace Now movement. In 1994, he became the facilities manager at BYU's Jerusalem Center, and in 2002, he was appointed to his current position as executive director of the Center.



Jerusalem viewed through a grassy archway. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.



A fountain. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.



The forum. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

Connections between the Jerusalem Center and the Local Israeli Academy

Jeffrey R. Chadwick

It is a privilege to participate in this symposium marking the thirtieth anniversary of the 1989 dedication of the Jerusalem Center. It is also a privilege to have been a repeating member of the BYU Jerusalem faculty since 1982, two years before the ceremony which broke ground for the Jerusalem Center in the summer of 1984. I vividly remember watching the various phases of the Center's construction (fig. 1) and being among the first to live and teach in the beautiful new building when it was occupied by students in 1987.

When we first occupied the Center, construction of some of its facilities was not completed. For example, the dining area, which would come to be called the Oasis, was not finished in time for the summer term of 1987, and my students and I had to walk across the street to the Commodore Hotel for our meals. During the first week my student group was lodging at the Center, I was approached by a man who owned the house just across the street from our lower gate and desired to meet some of his strange new neighbors. He invited me to his son's wedding, to be held in their small patio court that weekend. It was a delightful event for me and several of our students, as we began the process of getting to know the people of our new surroundings.

It was not all easy, however, and not always friendly. I also remember being approached by a belligerent man at a tourist site who recognized the students as the "Mormons" whose new Center he felt was a dangerous missionary presence in the Holy Land. He attempted to bait me and some of my students into a religious discussion, which we avoided. It would take quite some time for the fears that some people had about the



FIGURE 1. BYU Jerusalem Center under construction in June 1985. Photo courtesy Jeffrey R. Chadwick.

Center to abate. But eventually, things settled down, and as time passed, most of the people of Jerusalem, both Israeli Jews and Arab Palestinians, were drawn to their new “Mormon” neighbors.

As I recently walked through the gardens of the Center, I reflected on the beautiful trees that grow there. Our numerous olive and pomegranate trees have now seen thirty harvests, and the Jerusalem pines and cedars of Lebanon that were planted three decades ago have grown from skinny seedlings to mature trees, thick and stately, of soaring heights (fig. 2). It all seemed an appropriate symbol of how regard for the Center has changed in the Jerusalem community. While those trees were growing, we also gradually grew from being regarded as strange and suspect newcomers to established and appreciated neighbors. As Eran Hayet points out in his presentation, the attitude of the people of Jerusalem toward the Center has slowly evolved from suspicion and distrust to acceptance and respect.

The Jerusalem Center and the Local Academy

The influence of the Jerusalem Center on the local university community in Israel would be difficult to determine if viewed only from the



FIGURE 2. The upper gate and entrance to the Jerusalem Center in 2019. Photo courtesy Jeffrey R. Chadwick.

perspective of the Center's student programs, since they are closed to anyone but expatriate BYU students. Within just a few years of the Center's dedication, however, a number of BYU Jerusalem faculty were participating in research, symposia, archaeological excavations, and academic publications with colleagues from various Israeli institutions. Over time, it has been the efforts of BYU faculty, working within the academic structures of the Israeli academy, that have earned the Jerusalem Center a significant and growing academic reputation.

An early but important event in this process occurred in 1994, just five years after the Center's dedication. Professor Seymour Gitin, director of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, extended an invitation to the Jerusalem Center administration to have our students participate in an excavation at Tel Miqne, the site of biblical Ekron, some twenty miles west of Jerusalem (fig. 3). Ekron was one of the five major cities of the ancient Philistines. Jim Kearn, assistant to the BYU president for the Jerusalem Center, and Kent Brown, then the director of the Jerusalem Center, accepted the invitation to join the Tel Miqne-Ekron consortium for the excavation. The timing of



FIGURE 3. Professor Seymore Gitin of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research with BYU Jerusalem Center students excavating at Ekron in April 1994. Photo courtesy Jeffrey R. Chadwick.

the opportunity was ideal since the scheduled student trip to Egypt that semester had to be cancelled due to security concerns.

Kent assigned me the task of organizing our Center students for the excavation. About 150 students participated, 75 per week for the two weeks of the spring season that April. Professor Gitin requested that I serve in a supervisory role for the actual excavation, working with several other archaeologists who would manage the 75-student teams in their excavation squares at Ekron.¹ Their work was remarkably successful, as our student teams unearthed a ten-by-sixty-meter-long stretch of ancient Ekron's olive oil factory complex, including stone oil presses and cultic altars, dating to just before Ekron was destroyed by the Babylonians in 604 BC. A report on the Jerusalem Center excavation season was published in 1995.²

As a result of the Jerusalem Center's participation in the spring season in 1994, I was asked by Professor Gitin to join the supervisory staff of the Tel Miqne-Ekron Expedition for the remainder of its excavation

1. J. R. Chadwick, "Miqne/Ekron Spring Season 1994," *Biblical Archaeologist* 57, no. 3 (September 1994): 172-73.

2. Bruce D. MacKay, Seymour Gitin, and Trude Dothan, *Tel Miqne-Ekron Report of the 1994 Spring Excavations Field IISW: The Olive Oil Industrial Zone of the Late Iron Age II* (Jerusalem: W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, 1995).

schedule, which included summer seasons in 1995 and 1996.³ I have remained with the expedition, representing the Jerusalem Center as a member of the Tel Miqne-Ekron publication project until the present.

From this auspicious start in 1994, the Jerusalem Center has remained active in scholarly research within the academic community in Israel. However, rather than involving its students in large and expensive archaeology projects each semester, as was the case at Tel Miqne-Ekron, the Center has relied on its BYU faculty members to pursue its efforts of participating with the local academy. From time to time, this has involved sponsoring a symposium or conference session in the Jerusalem Center, highlighting key aspects of research in biblical or Near Eastern studies. Examples of these were the spring 1995 conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls that involved BYU Jerusalem faculty Don Parry, Dana Pike, and David Seely presenting alongside noted Israeli and international scholars. That conference produced a published volume edited by Parry and Stephen Ricks, another Jerusalem faculty member.⁴ Another example of academic conferences at the Center was the symposium on Jesus and archaeology organized in summer 2000 by James Charlesworth of Princeton Theological Seminary and held primarily at the Hospice Notre Dame in Jerusalem. I presented a paper and helped arrange for one of its sessions to be held in the Jerusalem Center's upper auditorium. That symposium also produced an academic publication.⁵

During the period of 2001 to 2006, when student programs at the Jerusalem Center were on hiatus and BYU faculty were not being regularly assigned to live at the Center, there was less academic participation with the Israeli academy. However, in 2001, I was invited to join the supervisory staff of the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project, which had begun excavating at Gath, the ancient Philistine capital and hometown of the biblical warrior Goliath (1 Sam. 17). Even though BYU was not sending students to the Center, the Center was interested in seeing that scholarly participation with the local academy continued, and I participated each summer in the excavations at Gath and also became a senior research fellow at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, where I

3. Mark Meehl, Seymour Gitin, and Trude Dothan, eds., *Tel Miqne-Ekron Excavations 1995–1996 Field INE East Slope—Iron Age I (Early Philistine Period)* (Jerusalem: W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, 2001).

4. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

5. James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006).

joined a project to publish results from the 1960s excavations at Tell er-Rumeide, the site of biblical Hebron. During this period, publications, generally with Israeli colleagues, began to appear on both the Hebron project⁶ and the Gath excavations.⁷ In every publication of which I have been a part, up to the present, I have ensured that the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies was prominently mentioned as my participating institution, not only to credit the Jerusalem Center for its support but to promote the Center's participation in and impact upon the academy there.

Notable Contributions by BYU Faculty Who Have Taught at the Center

Of course, I'm not alone in having connections with Israeli scholars. In this regard, I will highlight several BYU professors, all of whom have taught or have been administrators at the Center, often several times, whose work has added to the Jerusalem Center's academic reputation.

David Rolph Seely, professor of ancient scripture, has conducted research with both BYU and Israeli colleagues in the fields of the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Examples of his publications with the Israeli academy and international colleagues are chapters in the Brill volume mentioned above, in the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (DJD) series,⁸ and in the anniversary volume published in 2000 by the Israel Exploration Society and the Israel Museum's Shrine of the Book entitled *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years after Their Discovery*.⁹

Dana M. Pike, professor of ancient scripture, has researched and published with BYU and Israeli colleagues in Dead Sea Scrolls and Hebrew Bible topics. His publications with Israeli and international colleagues

6. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Discovering Hebron: The City of the Patriarchs Slowly Yields Its Secrets," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 31, no. 5 (September/October 2005): 24-33, 70-71.

7. Liora K. Horowitz, Justin Lev-Tov, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Stefan J. Wimmer, and Aren M. Maeir, "Working Bones: A Unique Iron IIA Bone Workshop from Tell es-Safi/Gath," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 69, nos. 3-4 (September 2007): 69-73.

8. Moshe Weinfeld and David R. Seely, "Barkhi Nafshi," in *Qumran Cave 4 XX: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2*, DJD 29, ed. Esther Chazon and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 255-334; and Moshe Weinfeld and David R. Seely, "Lament by a Leader," in DJD 29, 335-42.

9. David Rolph Seely, "Implanting Pious Qualities as a Theme in the Barki Nagshi Hymns," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years after Their Discovery*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Emmanuel Tov, and James C. VanderKam (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Shrine of the Book, 2000), 321-31.

in such venues include chapters in both the Brill and Shrine of the Book volumes mentioned above, as well as co-authorship of a volume on Dead Sea Scroll fragments from Qumran Cave 4 in the prestigious Discoveries in the Judean Desert series (DJD XXIX).¹⁰

Andrew C. Skinner, professor of ancient scripture, has publications with Israeli and international colleagues, including chapters in all three of the above-mentioned works—the Brill and Shrine of the Book volumes, and is co-author with Pike of the DJD XXXIII volume.

Donald W. Parry, professor of Hebrew, has done research and published with Israeli and international colleagues in the field of the Dead Sea Scrolls, including several books that he has authored and edited. Among his titles are *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants*,¹¹ the *Dead Sea Scrolls Handbook*,¹² and *Illuminating the Dead Sea Scrolls*.¹³ He also authored chapters in the Shrine of the Book volume and in the DJD series.

In addition to my own archaeology work, archaeological excavations and research in Israel, Egypt, and/or Jordan are currently being conducted by four BYU Jerusalem Center faculty:

Aaron Schade, professor of ancient scripture, is an internationally recognized scholar of ancient Moabite society and language and codirector of the Khirbet Ataruz Project in Jordan, an archaeological excavation of an Iron Age site in the ancient region of biblical Moab. Ataruz has yielded an impressive temple that contains numerous cultic vessels and an inscribed altar from the ninth century BC. Aaron is active in the preliminary publication of finds from Ataruz and has also published an important study on the famous Mesha Stele from Moab in the prestigious academic journal *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)*.¹⁴

10. Dana M. Pike and Andrew C. Skinner, *Qumran Cave 4 XXIII: Unidentified Fragments*, DJD XXXIII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); Dana M. Pike, “4Q466, Text Mentioning ‘Congregation of the Lord,’” and “4Q467, Text Mentioning ‘Light to Jacob,’” DJD XXXVI (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 396–400.

11. Donald C. Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

12. Donald C. Parry and Devorah Dimont, *Dead Sea Scrolls Handbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

13. Donald C. Parry, *Illuminating the Dead Sea Scrolls: Mysteries of Qumran Revealed* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2014).

14. Aaron Schade, “RYT or HYT in Line 12 of the Mesha Inscription: A New Examination of the Stele and the Squeeze, and the Syntactic, Literary, and Cultic Implications of the Reading,” *BASOR* 378 (2017): 145–62.



FIGURE 4. Mosaic from the Huqoq synagogue in Israel depicting a scene from the book of Jonah. Photo courtesy Jodi Magness.

Matthew Grey, associate professor of ancient scripture, is on the senior staff of the Huqoq Excavation Project in Israel's Galilee region, where he helps direct excavation of the fifth-century AD Talmudic-era synagogue and its remarkable mosaic floors depicting vivid biblical and Jewish historical scenes (fig. 4). Matt has coauthored several important studies with Israeli and American colleagues on Huqoq mosaic discoveries, including recent articles in *Biblical Archaeology Review*¹⁵ and in the academic journal *BASOR*.¹⁶ The work at Huqoq has also been supported by *National Geographic*, giving it a wider, popular audience.

George Pierce, assistant professor of ancient scripture, has excavated at several sites in Israel, including Jaffa, Beersheba, and Ashkelon, and currently serves on the senior staff of the Tel Shimron Excavations project in the Jezreel Valley of Israel's Galilee region. Among his more recent publications with Israeli and international scholars are chapters

15. Jodi Magness, Shua Kisilevitz, Matthew Grey, Dennis Mizzi, Karen Britt, and Ra'anan Boustan, "Inside the Huqoq Synagogue," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 45, no. 3 (May–June 2019): 24–38.

16. Jodi Magness, Shua Kisilevitz, Matthew Grey, Dennis Mizzi, Danien Schneider, Martin Wells, Karen Britt, Ra'anan Boustan, Shana O'Connell, Emily Hubbard, Jesse George, Jennifer Ramsay, Elisabetta Boaretto, and Michael Chazan, "The Huqoq Excavation Project: 2014–2017 Interim Report," *BASOR* 380 (2018): 61–131.

in excavation reports such as *The History and Archaeology of Jaffa*¹⁷ and *Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon*.¹⁸

Kerry Muhlestein, professor of ancient scripture and an Egyptologist, is the director of the BYU Egypt Excavation Project and has researched and excavated in Egypt for fifteen years. An example of his publications with international colleagues is his newly released volume, for which he is both chief editor and a contributing author, reporting his work on the Seila pyramid and the Fag el-Gamous cemetery.¹⁹ Egypt is a significant component of the Jerusalem Center's programs, and Kerry's work there represents an extended aspect of the Center's faculty impact upon the greater academy of the ancient Near East.

Other BYU Faculty Connections with the Israeli Academic Community

From the Center's opening in 1987 until 2002, the position of director at the Jerusalem Center was filled by BYU professors appointed for periods of two to three years. Among those were three senior scholars with well-known reputations in Israel and Egypt. Their influence upon the Jerusalem Center's acceptance within academic circles in Israel was significant.

Truman G. Madsen, now deceased but formerly a professor of philosophy and religious education, was a well-known scholar of Jewish studies and the interactions between the Jewish and Latter-day Saint communities. Truman had excellent connections with Israeli scholars from the Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, and the University of Haifa. He published with both Israeli and international colleagues on a variety of religious subjects. One example of those activities is the volume, for which he was co-editor and a contributor, addressing the subject of

17. Aaron A. Burke, Shelley Wachsmann, Simona Avnaim-Katav, Richard K. Dunn, Krister Kowalski, George A. Pierce, and Martin Peilstocker, "Jaffa's Ancient Inland Harbor: Historical, Cartographic, and Geomorphological Data," in *The History and Archaeology of Jaffa 2*, ed. Aaron A. Burke, Katherine Strange Burke, and Martin Peilstocker (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2017), 89–112.

18. George A. Pierce and Daniel M. Master, "Ashkelon as Maritime Gateway and Central Place," in *Ashkelon 5: The Land Behind Ashkelon (Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon)*, ed. Yaakov Huster (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 109–23.

19. Kerry Muhlestein, Krystal V. L. Pierce, and Bethany Jensen, eds., *Excavations at the Seila Pyramid and Fag el-Gamous Cemetery* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

covenant and chosenness in Judaism and Mormonism.²⁰ Truman passed away in 2010.

S. Kent Brown, emeritus professor of ancient scripture, has published widely with both BYU and international colleagues in the field of New Testament studies. He is an expert in classical languages and Egyptian Coptic and well known among senior Israeli archaeologists from when he was a teaching assistant to legendary Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin.

Arnold Green, now deceased but formerly a professor of history, was well known among scholars in both Israel and Egypt for his expertise in Arabic language and Islamic studies. He had taught at the American University in Cairo before coming to BYU. His reputation and connections within Jerusalem's Arab-Palestinian community helped forge relationships with scholars from Palestinian institutions such as Bir Zeit University and Al-Quds University. Arnie passed away in 2019.

Local Jerusalem Center Faculty Connections

From the outset of the Center's student programs, local Israeli and Palestinian teachers have served in part-time faculty or lecturing positions, teaching courses on Judaism and Islam, the Israeli and Palestinian narratives in the Holy Land, and introductory Hebrew and Arabic. A few of these have also been active in the local and international academy and even on the diplomatic stage. Their work has also enhanced the Jerusalem Center's reputation.

Rabbi David Rosen taught courses at the Jerusalem Center during the early 1990s, introducing students to Judaism, Jewish history, and Israeli history and politics. He has been a frequent speaker and columnist in Israeli cultural and journalistic venues and also in international news media. His vocal promotion and support of and association with the Jerusalem Center was widely influential in the increasing acceptance and respect that grew for the Center throughout the 1990s. Upon leaving his teaching role with the Center, he served as liaison to the Vatican for the Anti-Defamation League and worked widely in interreligious affairs, becoming international director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

Dr. Raphael Jospe taught at the Jerusalem Center during the mid-to-late 1990s, offering courses on Judaism, Jewish history, and Israel's history

20. Raphael Jospe, Truman G. Madsen, and Seth Ward, eds., *Covenant and Chosenness in Judaism and Mormonism* (Madison, Wis.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Press, 2001).

and politics. Rafi is a well-known scholar of Talmud and Rabbinic Judaism and has published widely in both Israeli and international venues, including Latter-day Saint venues. He was co-editor and contributor in the above-noted volume on covenant and chosenness in Judaism and Mormonism as well as in other publications.²¹ He went on to teach at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Bar-Ilan University in Israel and is editor of the Jewish philosophy division for the *Encyclopedia of Judaism*.

Dr. Bashir Bashir has taught at the Jerusalem Center since 2011 in courses covering Arab and Islamic history and the Palestinian narrative in the Holy Land. He is also an associate professor in the department of sociology, political science, and communication at the Open University of Israel and a senior research fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute. He has published several studies in these areas, an example of which is his recent co-edited volume on the Jewish Holocaust and the Palestinian *Nakba*.²²

Mr. Ophir Yarden has taught at the Jerusalem Center since 2007 in courses covering Jewish history and religion and the Israeli narrative in the Holy Land. He is also director of education for the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. He lectures widely at Israeli institutions and is a regular contributor to digital media commentaries on Jewish and Israeli issues. He has published a number of studies with local colleagues, including his article on the sanctity of Mount Herzl and Israel's Independence Day within local Israeli religious tradition.²³

My Connections

To conclude, I return to some of my efforts to build bridges between the Center and the local academic communities. For more than thirty years, I have been an active participant at Israeli academic conferences on

21. Raphael Jospe, *Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Brookline, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2009).

22. Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, eds., *The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity and Arab-Jewish Partnership* (Jerusalem: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2015).

23. Ophir Yarden, "The Sanctity of Mount Herzl and Independence Day in Israel Civil Religion," in *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Alberdina Houtman, Joshua J. Schwartz, and Marcel Poorthuis, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 317–48. See also his recent article, Ophir Yarden, "The Balfour Declaration: From Imagining a State to Re-imagining Majority-Minority Relations in Jewish Thought and the Jewish State," in *Religious Imaginations: How Narratives of Faith are Shaping Today's World*, ed. James Walters (London: Gingko, 2018), 57–81.

biblical studies. A recent example is the 2015 symposium in Jerusalem on Isaiah organized by James Charlesworth of Princeton Theological Seminary and published early in 2019. My subject and chapter covered insights on what scholars have called “Third Isaiah.”²⁴

Primarily, however, my work has been in archaeology and has included excavation work and its publication as well as related academic conferences and publications. In recent years, I participated in several archaeology-based symposia in Israel, one example being the conference on ancient Canaan in the Late Bronze Age held in 2014 at Bar-Ilan University, which featured primarily Israeli colleagues but also a number of international experts. I presented a paper on the Late Bronze Age at biblical Hebron,²⁵ but I was also a coauthor on a presentation on the Late Bronze Age at biblical Gath.²⁶ Another example is the symposium held at the University of Haifa in 2015 on the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund over a century’s time, and I was coauthor on a presentation about the Early Bronze Age fortifications of Gath, the published version of which appeared in 2019.²⁷

Like some of my other BYU colleagues, I present each autumn at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), always on archaeological work I have done at Gath, Ekron, Hebron, or Jerusalem. Some of these have been with student coauthors whom I have mentored, and several have been published.²⁸ Additionally, I regularly present papers at the Tell es-Safi/Gath annual lecture series and at

24. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “The Insights of Third Isaiah: Observations of a Traditionalist,” in *The Unperceived Unity of Isaiah*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 76–93.

25. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Hebron in the Late Bronze Age: Discoveries of the American Expedition to Hebron,” in *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Southern Canaan*, ed. Aren Maeir, Itzhaq Shai, and Chris McKinny (Berlin: Be Gruyter, 2019), 185–216.

26. Aren M. Maeir, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Amit Dagan, Louise A. Hitchcock, Jill Katz, Itzhaq Shai, and Joe Uziel, “The Late Bronze Age at Tell es-Safi/Gath and the Site’s Role in Southwestern Canaan,” in *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Southern Canaan*, ed. Aren Maeir, Itzhaq Shai, and Chris McKinny (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 1–18.

27. Eric L. Welch, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Itzhaq Shai, Jill Katz, Haskel J. Greenfield, Amit Dagan, and Aren M. Maeir, “The Limits of the Ancient City: The Fortifications of Tell es-Safi/Gath 115 Years after Bliss and Macalister,” in *Exploring the Holy Land: 150 Years of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, ed. David Gurevich and Anat Kidron (London: Equinox, 2019), 151–66.

28. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Hebron in Early Bronze Age III and Middle Bronze Age II: Fortification Walls in Area I.3 of the American Expedition to Hebron (Tell er-Rumeide),” in *Tell It in Gath: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Israel*, ed. Itzhaq Shai and others (Munster: Zaphon, 2018), 167–86.

the W. F. Albright Institute, where I have been a research fellow since 1996 and senior fellow since 2003. Perhaps the most unique experience I have had in this regard was an invitation in 2015 to present a lecture to the Palestinian faculty and students of the archaeology department at Al-Quds University. It was a particularly rewarding opportunity to represent the Jerusalem Center to our local Palestinian colleagues.

One of my primary archaeological activities has been the organization and publication of finds from the 1960s-era American Expedition to Hebron, directed by the late Philip Hammond. Prior to Hammond's passing, he authorized me to undertake a widescale effort to publish his finds from Hebron. The American Expedition to Hebron Publication Project (which I direct) has published encyclopedia and reference articles as well as lengthy peer-reviewed reports.²⁹ Also, because of my work in and familiarity with Jerusalem and its archaeology and history in all ages, I was selected to contribute an extensive entry on Jerusalem for the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*.³⁰

Perhaps the most noted of my connections with the local academy has been my involvement since 2001 with the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project directed by Professor Aren Maeir of Bar-Ilan University. Gath was a major Canaanite site in the Bronze Age periods and the chief city of the Philistine pentapolis in the Iron Age periods. I serve as senior field archaeologist for the expedition. I have supervised and taught dozens of graduate students and hundreds of other students and volunteers from Israel and countries around the world who have excavated with us. In 2019, we completed excavation on the lower city wall and gateway known as the "water gate" (fig. 5). The finds were widely featured in Israeli and international news media due to their dating from the eleventh to tenth centuries BC, the probable time period of Gath's most noted native son, Goliath. Recent examples of published preliminary reports include those in two consecutive issues of the journal *Near Eastern Archaeology*.³¹

29. See footnotes 23 and 26 above for peer-reviewed reports. For reference articles, see Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Hebron," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology*, ed. Daniel M. Master (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 485–90; and Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Hebron: Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Archaeology," *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. 11 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 694–97.

30. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, "Jerusalem—Archaeology," in *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. 13 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 1002–32.

31. See *Near Eastern Archaeology* 80, no. 4 (2017) and 81, no. 1 (2018), the entirety of both containing results from Gath. Specifically see Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Joe Uziel, Eric L. Welch, and Aren M. Maeir, "Walled Up to Heaven! Early and Middle Bronze Age Fortifications at Tell es-Safi/Gath," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 80, no. 4 (2017): 285–91; Aren M. Maeir,



FIGURE 5. The author stands atop city wall and gate foundations he excavated at Tell es-Safi/Gath in Israel, 2019. Photo courtesy the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project.

As this overview illustrates, my Jerusalem Center faculty colleagues and I have made concerted efforts to be involved with the Israeli academic community. The combination of the excellent scholarship and productivity of our Jerusalem Center faculty has resulted in a positive and growing reputation for the Center. My hope is that this will continue and expand as more of our younger colleagues participate in teaching at and representing the Jerusalem Center. For me, it has been the privilege of a lifetime.

Jeffrey R. Chadwick is the Jerusalem Center Professor of Archaeology and Near Eastern Studies and Professor of Church History and Jewish Studies at BYU. Since 1982, he has taught in twenty-three Jerusalem Center student programs and has excavated for twenty-three seasons at major archaeological sites in Israel. He is currently the senior field archaeologist with the Tell es-Safi/Gath Archaeological Project in Israel. He has published widely with Israeli colleagues in the fields of archaeology and biblical studies.

Itzhaq Shai, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, and Joe Uziel, "The Late Bronze Age at Tell es-Safi/Gath," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 80, no. 4 (2017): 292–95; and Jeffrey R. Chadwick and Aren M. Maeir, "Judahite Gath in the Eighth Century BCE: Finds in Area F from the Earthquake to the Assyrians," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 81, no. 1 (2018): 48–54.

“If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem”

Jeffrey R. Holland

Thank you for allowing me to be with you today. In some ways, what I say today could be a precursor to the sermon someone might give at my funeral. Funeral or not, I am going to have these words written on my tombstone: “He did not fight at Hawn’s Mill, he was never incarcerated at Liberty Jail, he never pulled a handcart, but he did work on the BYU Jerusalem Center.” I have all the scar tissue, shared with a lot of other people, to prove that point. I am delighted to have the chance on this thirtieth anniversary to reminisce a little about that experience.¹

A couple of tributes need to be paid right at the outset. Since they would not say it of themselves, honor and integrity demand that I say a word or two about some very devoted people who made the Jerusalem Center happen. Even as I single out a few, so much more should be said about so many more.

First, and above all, this was Robert Taylor’s dream. Bob has been gone for quite a while, and many in this room will not know him, but this Center was Bob’s dream, born out of his service to Brigham Young University’s Continuing Education program. I came on the scene in 1976 when I was named the Church Commissioner of Education, but by then, Bob had been at BYU for twenty years! In 1966 (when I was still a student here), he helped conceive the idea of a semester abroad program—or at least an extended academic experience of some kind—in the Holy Land. That program was set to launch the summer of 1967, but just as

1. Incidents described here are from the author’s personal recollections and do not include the citation of other sources.

the students were about ready to get on the plane in Salt Lake City, the Six-Day War began, and they were unable to go as scheduled.

From June 5 to June 10, 1967, the face of the Middle East was changed, and that had ramifications all over the world. Certainly it had ramifications in Provo, Utah. Everyone was forced to tread water for a while just to see what a post-war Israel would look like. From the original group of students, Bob and his associates were able to salvage twenty who were still willing to go. They frantically reassured the parents that their children would be safe—and prayed that they would be. Those twenty were finally on a plane to Jerusalem in February of 1968. Dan Ludlow, who was very knowledgeable about that part of the world, was their wonderful, legendary faculty host. It is an understatement to say that this first study abroad venture was a hand-to-mouth experience. They lived in all kinds of East Jerusalem hotels, local Jewish homes, and various *kibbutzim* up and down the land. But this initial study abroad program in Israel was the prelude to what would become the mature program at the BYU Jerusalem Center.

But it took twenty years for that Center to be realized. Brother Taylor was frustrated for many of those years as he tried to make it happen. He threatened to quit two or three times, and understandably so. But in spite of disappointments, he stayed with this dream, and through thick and thin he remained a wonderful friend and neighbor, fellow ward member, and colleague to me. I hope Bob can peek through the veil and see on Mount Scopus that marvelous work and wonder that he, more than any other human being, is responsible for creating.

Surely one of the best things Bob Taylor did as an administrator was to hire David Galbraith. After David's youthful years of roaming around a variety of academic programs and a variety of *kibbutzim*—one of which is where he met and married his beloved Freida—David was hired part time by Brigham Young University in 1969. That year, David and Freida and the beginning of a little family moved to Israel to spend “a few months” getting the Jerusalem Center program off the ground. (Twenty years later, David was wondering when those few months were up. We said, “Don't call us; we'll call you.”) Soon enough he came on full time with the university. At least ten of the twenty years that the Galbraiths were in Jerusalem were spent planning and developing, helping and hoping for the Jerusalem Center to be built. David picked up a PhD along the way in, guess what? It is chillingly ironic: conflict resolution. He should pay us for twenty years of lab work on that dissertation! He

not only wrote about it in that land and country, he lived it day in and day out in his employment.

David and Bob can represent a whole team who were Jerusalem BC (Before Center). Jim Kearl and Eran Hayet are two who represent the Center AD (After Dedication). Jim is as fine an administrator as I have worked with in my academic coming and going. He was an academic vice president for a time while I was at Brigham Young University. He knows budgets. He understands the law. He's mindful of the Church's money and the Church's relationships. He knows the value of the widow's mite. For a portion of the recent past, certainly during the time I was living in Chile, Jim was the ecclesiastical advisor to the Brethren as well as the university administrator of this Center, and he was much loved and dearly admired in both roles. Jim is not famous for tiptoeing through things in ballet slippers. But he has the skill—and has had it for thirty years—to manage a very, very complex university operation, almost literally single-handed. And I include Debra Petersen as the fingers on that single hand. Running probably the leanest organization in university history, Jim and an assistant have done and continue to do that year in and year out, making the Center what it is now. We love him and appreciate him. We are grateful for the hard decisions he has often had to make.

As for Eran Hayet, he is the finest unordained stake president in this Church. We don't have stake presidents who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Eran would be our first candidate if we had one. He loves the students. The students love him. My own children and grandchildren are part of the group that still swoons over the mention of Eran's name. He loves the purposes of the Center. He knows the community. He is, himself, a gifted politician in the best sense of that word. He has a political sense that has allowed us to survive the political winds that blow every day in Israel generally, and in Jerusalem specifically. With the hiring of Eran and his staff in 2002, we actually began a serious, important new chapter in the Center in which we did not ask faculty members to double as administrators. Eran and his group took over the administrative duties and left the teaching to the faculty. He became Mr. Continuity, the institutional memory of that Center. We mark that as a singular turning point in the Center's maturity. I'm grateful that Eran is here, and I consider him and his wife, Naama, my dear, dear personal friends.

I could name dozens of other people—especially Fred Schwendiman and Robert Smith—who have made the Jerusalem Center a success. But

I can't start that, because if I manage to name some, I will still leave too many others out. I do pay tribute to two special men who stand alone, above all else and through all else that happened there: they are President Howard W. Hunter and President James E. Faust. From the beginning, when both were members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, those two had the commission from the First Presidency to live with this project, and live with it they did. They gave their hearts and their souls to it. President Hunter went through so much just to travel to and from Jerusalem. He suffered from neuropathy and degeneration of his back and leg muscles. I do not know whether you can imagine the difficulty of his leaving the Tel Aviv airport and not getting out of his passenger seat until Salt Lake City, but that is what I saw him do. This man had as much steel in his backbone as anyone I have ever known. That kind of discipline, that kind of silent suffering, nearly month in and month out during our most demanding period in Jerusalem, is inspiring. And President Faust was at his side every step of the way. I honor them and love them. There can't be any story told of that Center without them. I'm grateful to represent them here today.

I suppose the real maturing of the Center concept started in September of 1972. President Lee had come to Jerusalem at least once before but never as President of the Church. Edwin Cannon was president of the Swiss Mission then and had responsibility for the Middle East. President Cannon said, "President Lee's visit must surely have been a dry run for the Second Coming because not even the angels of heaven knew he was going to make that visit." I don't know that David or anyone else knew that President Lee was coming until he appeared on the doorstep. But that started a chain of events that led to the building of the Jerusalem Center.

A great deal was accomplished in the three days of his visit. A branch was created, and young David Galbraith was named as the first branch president. President Lee met and greeted Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, who became our most significant secular contact and began the establishment of our strong relationship with him. In those seventy-two hours of that 1972 visit, Mayor Kollek suggested to President Lee the idea of a memorial to Orson Hyde on the Mount of Olives. Mayor Kollek knew the Orson Hyde story almost better than we did; he knew it and quoted it and reminded us of it. He said that if we could figure out how to pay for it, he would make sure that an appropriate park and tribute to Orson Hyde was created. An agreement was made to do so, and David was told to shepherd that project in his spare

time. The dedication of that garden came in October of 1979, when the story of the Center gets a little more intriguing.

President Spencer W. Kimball and President N. Eldon Tanner were at the dedication of that Orson Hyde Memorial Garden. We collectively, and those on site particularly, wanted to make a pitch to them about buying a piece of property that could serve as a center for the university. A lot of time had been spent—I can remember through those years looking at any number of pieces of property, none of them very good—talking about where we might build such a center. Well, with two members of the First Presidency in town, the chance to try again was too good to pass up.

Bob and Kathy Taylor first took President Tanner and a small group of others to the various proposed sites around town. (To protect his health, President Kimball stayed at the hotel.) One site was near the Old City just outside the Jaffa Gate. Another site was a converted hotel on the road to Bethlehem, and so on. None of them, I say, were very good. We saved the better one (which was just about the best you could say for it, that it was "better") to show President Tanner last. We called it the "L-shaped property," located at the base of Mount Scopus beneath the Augusta Victoria Hospital. It did not take President Tanner thirty seconds to turn his nose up at that piece of property. About all that was there was an old house with some sheep and goats wandering in and out of it, an irregular piece of property on which nothing very attractive could have been built. He was not interested. He started to walk up the hill, moving away from the infamous L-shaped property to a little knoll from which one could see a magnificent view of the Old City, Gethsemane, the Kidron Valley, the Temple Mount, and much of East and West Jerusalem. We called it the Supreme Court site because of its proximity to the then-proposed location for that building. There was only one minor drawback to the property: It was absolutely, categorically, unequivocally, positively, without a doubt unavailable. President Tanner looked out over the magnificent view and said, "Get this site." Bob and Kathy, David and Freida, and everybody else who was there sputtered and stuttered and stammered and protested, explaining why it was not available. "Did this man not understand?" they wondered as they explained again all the reasons it was not available. President Tanner simply listened and smiled. If you can picture him, if you can remember him, he was not a man of many words. With a penetrating glance, he stood silently and then said, "Don't tell me your troubles. Just get the property." Then he turned and walked away.



The Jerusalem Center as seen from the Old City. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

So, the site had been chosen, but nobody had bothered to tell the owner. Never mind that it was not for sale anyway. And I quote David: “Following that momentous event, I was nevertheless so convinced that the site was simply not available, not even desirable given all the potential political, legal, and religious entanglements, that I dismissed it and continued to search for other sites.” Continuing his quote: “A dozen sites had been considered. I felt that even now with President Kimball’s visit we were no closer to identifying the site then than we had been before his arrival. As everyone left town I thought, okay, we will get up tomorrow morning and keep looking for a site.” Well, there sits that Center on the site President Tanner said to get.

Enter one of the many other unsung heroes, Bob Thorne. Former missionary companion of Bob Taylor, a dear friend, and a local Utah County boy, Bob arrived in Jerusalem to work his head off for what was at least a full calendar year—all of 1981 and maybe more. He worked on how to get a lease for property that was unavailable—that was in every way unavailable. It was green-belt property. It was expropriated land. It had itself been a victim of the Six-Day War. It was owned, technically, by a Palestinian *kwaff*, but it was managed by a Jewish government. It had archaeological potential, and archaeological issues were a significant problem for anyone doing a dig of any kind in Israel. There were all these reasons and more as to why this property could not be used. But Brother Thorne, with of course the local folks’ help, went to work and

determined after almost a year and a half that we would in fact get a lease for that property.

I am making no attempt to talk about the miracle that that was, and I do not use the word *miracle* lightly. I have in my hand sixteen single-spaced pages outlining some thirty-three examples of what I consider miracles—large *M* or small—that had to occur in order for us to have that property. Trust me that during that experience, I finally stopped worrying about this Center. Somewhere in the 1981–82 time period, I said, "I'm going to stop worrying about this project, because it is absolutely clear that the Lord wants a center on that property. So, I'm not going to fret over it. Obviously, Someone else is taking care of it." And I felt great peace. There was no reason to feel such, no rational reason, no sane reason to have been peaceful about any of it, but I was, in spite of really difficult, miserable things that came later, including a public relations onslaught that was virtually unprecedented in that land.

Finally, dirt started to fly in August of 1984. We were inconspicuous at the time; almost no one even knew we were there. But when that building started to go up the side of the hill, every possible opponent you could imagine came out of the woodwork and shouted, usually in Yiddish, "What is that happening on Mount Scopus?" This uproar led to three incidents which, with President Hunter and President Faust gone, I am probably the only person remaining who knows enough of them to mention them in detail.

To understand this drama, you must understand a degree of the opposition that arose against us. It was an explosion led by ultra-Orthodox figures who were determined that we would not remain on that site and who created an international incident to make sure we did not. This opposition led to a decision we had to make at Church headquarters. In order to quell this uproar and calm this international incident, we had to decide if we would agree to sign an undertaking affirming we would not proselyte in Jerusalem or in the Holy Land generally until that government said we could. Now, as you know, Israel is home to the three major monotheistic religions in the world—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. And the State of Israel's constitution, which was established in 1948, guaranteed religious freedom to those religions, including the right to proselyte. But we could not get from A to B, let alone to C, D, or E, as long as they believed there was a "threat" that we would proselyte.

With marches and protestations, people surrounding the Temple Mount, and television coverage to every continent, we had to convene

a special meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on July 31, 1985, which was the first of these three generally unknown incidents to which I referred. (You will recognize that July 31 is technically still one day within the legal fiction that is called the General Authority's vacation period.) But everyone came together on this vacation day and met to discuss whether we could, would, and should sign an undertaking not to proselyte. It was a long conversation. I was the only non-General Authority in the room. The Church had never *signed* such an undertaking. There were places where we did not proselyte, but we had never signed anything in that regard. The discussion went around and around. I basically listened and answered questions when asked.

I was forty-four years old at the time, and I had never in my life been in such a meeting. I have not been in many like that since, even as I still work and walk in those same rooms. The entire history of the Jerusalem Center program was reviewed, everything that we had done for all these years. The Brethren were shown photos depicting the Center's progress. They saw all the accusations that were being made about proselyting. We were moving toward the view that "Yes, maybe we can sign it," when one of the Brethren spoke up (all names will be omitted here) and said, "I'm willing to do what we have to do. I'm willing to sign with everybody else, but just remember that I would rather walk away from any number of Jerusalem Center projects than ever compromise our integrity as a Church. Our integrity includes that if we say we're not going to proselyte, then we don't proselyte. There won't be any quibbling, there won't be any behind-the-scenes fudging or under-the-table activity. So, Brethren, whatever we're going to do, let's make sure we understand the full implication of that before we put ink to that paper."

There was silence—again. And another prayer—again. Then one of the men said, "Brethren, this is Jerusalem. This is the land of prophets and apostles and the Son of the living God. Who knows when we will ever have another chance to obtain property in such a contentious land. Furthermore, we've had to face these kinds of dilemmas before." With that comment, everyone looked up. No one could remember when we had ever faced something like this. Then this brother read from the first chapter of Mormon, verses 16 and 17:

"I did endeavor to preach unto this people, but my mouth was shut, and I was forbidden . . . [to] preach unto them. . . .

"I did remain among them, but I was forbidden to preach unto them, because of the hardness of their hearts."

Then he read from Mormon 3, verse 16: "[Then] I did even as the Lord had commanded me; and I did stand as an idle witness to witness . . . unto the world the things which I saw."

A tremendous Spirit came into the room. It was the answer to a lot of prayer and a lot of appropriate caution. It seemed to be a message from heaven itself saying that there was some precedent for the decision being made. So, a member of the First Presidency said, "Are we prepared to 'stand as an idle witness' and allow our 'mouth to be shut' for a season?" The Brethren said, "Yes, if we have to." So, President Ezra Taft Benson signed an undertaking to that effect for the Church, and I signed for Brigham Young University. The undertaking was to be delivered to Jerusalem five days later—on August 5.

On that day, August 5, 1985, the second incident to which I referred came when Sister Holland and I touched down at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv with both undertakings signed and firmly in hand. Any trip to Israel can be surprising, and landing at that airport has its challenges—certainly had its challenges in those days. For security's sake, the planes are parked at that airport out away from the terminal; then the passengers disembark and take the bus to the terminal. This time, as the plane was taxiing into a designated area for disembarking, the captain came on the intercom and said, "Would everyone please remain seated? No one will be allowed off this plane until further notice. Please remain in your seats." Well, there was a lot of whispering back and forth. I thought, "Welcome to Israel." The attendants were whispering, darting back and forth, and still no one seemed to give a signal about disembarking. In a funny way, I thought people were looking at us. As time passed, I still thought they were looking at us, but I couldn't see why they would be interested in somebody from Provo, Utah. Then the chief steward came up and said, "Mr. and Mrs. Holland, please remain seated. We are going to unload all the passengers but you. Please be calm. We will give you instructions when the others have left the plane." Please be calm. Sure! At that point the captain came on the intercom and said, "All passengers except Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Holland are free to disembark." If we weren't known by the others before, we were surely known then.

Needless to say, we had visions of ending up in prison, of never seeing our children again, and wondering who would start school at BYU, which was just weeks away.

To make a long and very dramatic story a little shorter, two military guards came on the plane after everybody else had disembarked and escorted us through immigration—the easiest time I have ever had

in my life going through immigration. They dispatched someone to get our two small pieces of luggage and then guided us through the back rooms (filled with forklifts and cartons and containers) of the Ben Gurion Airport to the rear entrance of the airport where a government vehicle was parked, which was going to take us to our BYU vehicle. All along the way we could hear a dull roar somewhere outside the airport, but at this point we could have heard howitzers going off and we couldn't have been more jittery. And then we saw it. Rounding the corner and milling toward us were some five hundred or so Yeshiva students, shouting and carrying signs telling us to go home. Here is the text of some of those signs:

Jeffrey Holland, do not desecrate our faith.

Jeff, go home.

JH, we will not sell our land to Mormon missionaries.

Teddy Kollek, mayor of Salt Lake City.

Jeffrey, stop your missionary work before we retaliate.

David O. McKay, every member a missionary.

There at the bottom of this particular placard was a citation to the general conference report. (How do you get a Latter-day Saint general conference report at a Yeshiva? Who knows?) Lastly, one of the signs read:

Jeffrey, we will not sit idly by while you Momens [sic] baptize our brothers.

Well, after the shock of seeing all of that had settled in, I was really quite pleased. They had spelled my name right. They didn't get the Church's name right, but they got mine. And I seemed to be the only threat in this whole matter. Apparently, they did not know another name except that of David O. McKay. I have always worn as a badge of courage that President Thomas S. Monson would say for the rest of his life, "Jeff, you're the only man I know who is on a first name basis with his enemies."

Now, in fairness, the Yeshiva kids didn't have the slightest idea what they were doing. All they probably knew was that it was a day off from school. Someone had probably said, "Do you want a trip down to the airport?" They probably got them an ice cream cone along the way and handed them a placard. Anyway, I was complimented that they received us with open arms and included one authentic reference to the conference report.

That started a campaign—nearly two weeks of nonstop, around-the-clock interviews with seemingly everyone. ABC and BBC, the *New York Times*, all the local press, the *Jerusalem Post* and *Haaretz*, and on and on

and on. It was absolutely nonstop, trying to turn the tide of this opposition and to make clear that we were *not* there to build a missionary center. It went as well as it could. Those who were there have been very kind about the impact that visit had, but it was hard work. And it did not stop the opposition because the trouble kept coming even after we got on a plane to come back home. It continued to grow until the night of November 13 and the morning of November 14, 1985, which was a full year after the start of construction. That night marked the third incident to which I referred—a time when I thought we were going to start World War III. Here is the situation in a nutshell:

With Israeli politics being what Israeli politics are, it was one of those moments when there was a 60-60 deadlock in Israel's 120-seat Knesset, a standoff between the Labor Party-led coalition and the conservative Likud Party-led coalition. Late 1985 was a time of great controversy. There was talk of war with Jordan and/or Syria. There were threats that war planes were warming up in Egypt and other Gulf states at the time, at least figuratively "warming up." The problem was that the Israeli government couldn't break this deadlock between the parties, tenuous as it was. So an agreement had been made that one prime minister from the Likud Party, Yitzhak Shamir, would rule for a year, and then Shimon Peres of the Labor Party would administer for two years. They were to trade back and forth, from Likud to Labor and from Labor to Likud. It just happened that Mr. Shamir had finished his year, and Mr. Peres was starting his two years.

The defense minister for the Likud Party coalition was Ariel Sharon, who, I suppose, was one of the most volatile men on the planet at that time. He was very hawkish, and it seemed he was itching for war. In contrast, Mr. Peres was quite determined to keep Israel out of another war. They argued back and forth, occasionally literally screaming at each other. It was a very hotly contended controversy. In the middle of that controversy was a little conservative party who were part of the Likud Party's coalition—the Shas Party as I recall; I think they had four seats in the Knesset. The miracle of a parliamentary arrangement in politics is that one or two or three seats can make the entire difference in a coalition, and thus they can "rule the world." The Shas people said in effect, "You have this deadlock, and we are willing to reconsider our loyalties. We will, in fact, give our four seats, our four votes, to the prime minister who will move the Mormons off Mount Scopus. Whoever will do that gets our four votes."

That started a series of phone calls the night of November 13, 1985, that came in to me about every hour. I stayed up all night. David

Galbraith, Bob Thorne, Fred Schwendiman, and Bob Smith were on the other end of the phone. We were calling each other to ask questions: “Is there going to be war?” “Is somebody going to call for a vote?” “Is anyone going to listen to the Shas people?” “Are we going to be the cause of bringing the Israeli government down or up, as the case may be?” That went on all night long.

By six o'clock the next morning, I was exhausted emotionally as well as physically, and it was getting worse. I said to my associates, “I need to call President Hinckley.” At that time President Gordon B. Hinckley was Chairman of the Executive Committee on the BYU Board of Trustees, in the seat I now hold. It was now Thursday morning, temple-meeting morning. I said, “I’ll give President Hinckley another hour, then I’ll call to tell him the problem and get his counsel. What do we do if we cause a war?” We had never had that experience, not since Johnson’s Army had been sent out to look at us in the 1850s. So I called, I think at quarter of seven. Obviously, President Hinckley was up and about. We had a short but memorable conversation. I tried to rehearse what was happening. He listened, then said, “I’ll take it to the temple. I’m on my way now. I will get back to you.”

So, he went to the temple. The First Presidency and Twelve discussed the situation and said, “The Lord has to help us with this. We need to pray.” Which, of course, is what we do in the temple in our Thursday meetings. President Benson, who was getting a little older, said, “May I be voice for our prayer today?” As the Brethren who were there have described that experience, President Benson prayed at length with increasing strength in that temple setting. I was not there, but those who were say that at the very end he was not really praying as much as he was testifying to the Lord of the need for this facility and for peace to accompany the building of it. That concluded the meeting. President Hinckley called and said, “We’ve done all we can do. You’ve done all you can do. Give the brethren in Jerusalem our love and tell them to keep praying. Stay close to the telephone, and let’s see what happens.”

Well, what happened was two of the miracles in that thirty-three-item list of miracles. One is that Ariel Sharon apologized, which he probably had never done in his life. I do not think he knew the meaning of the word nor actually knew how to do it. Nevertheless, he publicly apologized to Shimon Peres for jeopardizing the government and putting it in crisis. He asked for Peres’s political forgiveness. The other miracle was that Shimon Peres accepted the apology. He had been a very, very good friend of the Center and a very good friend to us personally.

He accepted Sharon's apology and acknowledged that Mr. Shamir had done a wonderful job in launching his term of service. A little harmony came into the Knesset, and things were put at ease, at least for the time being, in that strained situation. The talk on the street was that a political miracle had happened.

I agree that a miracle did happen, but it did not originate in Jerusalem. And it did not come from London, or Washington, D.C., or New York City. That miracle came from the fourth floor of the Salt Lake Temple where a prophet, a seer, and a revelator—older and getting a little feeble—had prayed down safety and protection onto a project the Lord wanted completed in that land.

Let me close with a handful of lessons learned through this experience. Number one: The Lord can do His own work. He would like us to help. By and large He needs us to help. It is generally assumed that we have to help. But I testify that in this case, and in so many others, the Lord can do His own work, and He did His own work there.

Lesson two: Brick and mortar is fine, but it is the people who created the BYU Jerusalem Center who are most important in this story. And it was when our backs were to the wall that the right people were at the right place at the right time—people from the Church, from the university, from the government, from the building community, from the architectural team. I feel like my blood is in the mortar of the Jerusalem Center; I love it. But to this day, when I think of the Center, it's not the glass or the teak wood or the stone that I think about most. I think of the people there and here who made it happen and who continue to make it happen, people I love and admire.

Lesson three: When you start building something in the name of the Lord, do not stop. We started construction in August of 1984. We did not have a building permit until January of 1985. We were throwing dirt on a wing and a prayer. We could have been forced to walk away from that at any moment because we did not have a permit. We were not breaking the law. We were just being foolish, foolhardy. There was no law broken. We could do anything we wanted on that property because we held the lease. But we could not occupy without that permit, so we were just counting on getting one. And we got it. There were so many reasons for people to say, "Wait, wait! Stop, stop! Go this far and stop; go that far and stop." And it is to the credit of Eli Rahat, Eran Hayet's team, and a whole circle of other people, who said, "We're not stopping. We're not stopping for anything." If they had not had that courage to keep going on faith, we would not be at the Center today.

Lesson four: We have not yet realized the full potential of that Center. I do not know what that will be, nor when it will be. A lot of you have enjoyed the experience of the Center. Some of you in attendance today were students there years ago. We have all kinds of people represented here who have loved and blessed that Center. But whatever the Center has been, it is yet going to be more than that. Someday. I do not know what, and I do not know exactly how. Even if that potential only means more students from more places, students not only from Provo but also from Europe and Asia and Africa. My testimony to you is that we have not yet realized its full potential, and the Lord has it there for an immense amount of good yet to be done in the lives of many, many Latter-day Saints.

I close with this tribute, one of my favorite passages of scripture. It is, ironically, one of the psalms of captivity so well known in Jewish lore. I will share with you just these two verses:

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

“If I do not remember thee, [Jerusalem,] let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy” (Ps. 137:5–6).

Today, in this setting with all of you, I would like to say that at least for this hour with you, Jerusalem has been a “chief joy.” It has been a joy to reminisce about her, and it is a joy to know she is host to the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. Thank you for letting me remember her on this thirtieth anniversary. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Jeffrey R. Holland was ordained a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on June 23, 1994. At the time of this call, Elder Holland was serving as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, to which he had been called on April 1, 1989. From 1980 until his call as a General Authority in 1989, Jeffrey R. Holland served as the ninth president of Brigham Young University. He is a former Church Commissioner of Education and dean of the College of Religious Education at BYU. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in English and religious education, respectively, from Brigham Young University. He obtained a master's degree and a PhD in American Studies from Yale University.

Faculty Perspectives and Experiences at the Jerusalem Center

Gaye Strathearn, Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture, BYU

Andrew C. Skinner, Professor of Ancient Scripture, BYU

S. Kent Brown, Emeritus Professor of Ancient Scripture, BYU

Ed Stratford, Associate Professor of History, BYU

Kent P. Jackson, Emeritus Professor of Ancient Scripture, BYU

Introductions

Strathearn: In 1985, my friend and I decided to backpack around the world. I said that if we were doing that, the first thing I wanted to do was get to the Holy Land. We were on a dime traveling, and we just had a Bible in one hand and a *Let's Go Europe* in the other. That visit to the Holy Land started a fire within me, a love of that land. I was home about a year and a half when Elder James E. Faust spoke at our stake conference in Australia. He began by noting that “the Jerusalem Center is opening soon.” After conference, I asked Elder Faust, “Really, what do I need to do?” He told me to write to Robert Taylor. Two months later, I was at the Jerusalem Center as a student in the fall 1987 program. I later returned as a faculty member from August 2014 to August 2015.

Skinner: I first taught at the Jerusalem Center in the 1990 fall program. Janet and I took our six children to Jerusalem as the Gulf War was looming large. I taught in the 1991 spring and summer programs following the end of the Gulf War, then again in 1995–96 when we had five children with us, in 2008–09 when two children were with us, and in 2016. I was the associate director for academics in fall semester 2011 and again in 2018–19. On the latter two occasions, Janet assisted with the field trip program logistics.

Brown: I first taught in BYU's Jerusalem study abroad program from January to June 1978. Gayle and I had five children with us. Our second assignment was from August 1987 to August 1988, with three children (a fourth later joined us as a JC student). I was the director of the Center

from June 1993 to June 1996 and returned as associate director for academics from February 2009 to September 2010. Gayle assisted with the field trip program logistics.

Stratford: I first lived at the Jerusalem Center as a student in summer term 1998. I first taught at the Center from August 2012 to August 2013, this time with my wife, Candice, and our five children. We are scheduled to return to the Center in the spring of 2021 for a sixteen-month assignment, depending on the COVID pandemic. We will have four of our children with us. Our eldest will be off to college.

Jackson: I taught at the Jerusalem Center three times, in summer 1986, fall 1988, and winter–spring 1997. I was the associate director for academics in 2010–11 and, following a short break, again in 2012–13. Nancy assisted with the field trip program when I served as associate director. I was without my family in 1986, and in 1988 we had five young children with us. In 1997, we had five teenagers with us, which was much more fun, and in 2010–13 Nancy and I were by ourselves, which was even more fun.

Looking back at your teaching experiences at the Center, what one or two things stand out as the most memorable or impactful or enjoyable? Why?

Strathearn: Teaching at the Jerusalem Center is a totally unique experience, something I haven't been able to recreate in Provo. Some of that uniqueness comes from the fact that we live with the students 24/7; we eat with them; we go to church with them; we're together in the classroom four days a week, and the other day we're on a bus, sometimes for as long as ten hours. These experiences forge a connection between teacher and student that I absolutely loved.

I'd like to mention just two aspects of the Jerusalem Center experience, with examples, that illustrate why teaching there has become one of the highlights of my career.

First, teaching on site enabled the historical context of the biblical stories to become more real. For example, Jeremiah 34:7 tells of the Babylonian destruction of the Judahite cities of Jerusalem, Lachish, and Azekah: "Then the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah." The ostraca discovered at Lachish are just one means of understanding some of the context for that invasion. In Letter 4, Hoshaiah, a military officer stationed near Lachish, writes to Yaush (possibly the commanding officer at Lachish),

informing him “that we are watching the (fire) signals of Lachish according to the code which my lord gave us, for we cannot see Azekah,” suggesting that Azekah had fallen to the Babylonian army and Lachish would be next. When we visited Lachish, we gathered at the base of the tell and talked about the history of Lachish, including the Babylonian invasion. The students were respectful but clearly not on the edge of their seats with excitement. But when we went up to the top of the tell, we told them we were going to try to recreate the scene described in Letter 4. We were in phone contact with members of Ron Anderson’s class, who were on top of Azekah at the same time with their own mirror. It took a few minutes until we got the mirror working in the right direction, but suddenly some of the students saw a flash of light on the horizon and shouted out. Now *everyone* was eagerly looking. Suddenly this part of history became relevant! What a tremendous opportunity for experiential learning!

Second, the Center’s field trips offer a wonderful opportunity to build on the “power of place” to contemplate the things of eternity. An example of this, although there are many, is the Jabbok River in Jordan. Visually, this place isn’t a particularly inviting place—there was a lot of litter and the river wasn’t very clean—but it provided a wonderful backdrop to talk about the patriarch Jacob and Genesis 25–35. I love this story of spiritual transformation. As the grandson of Abraham and the son of Isaac, Jacob is an important part of the covenant story, but what I particularly love about it is the way that the account shows Jacob growing in his appreciation of the covenant until he had his *own*



The Jabbok River in Jordan. Courtesy Gaye Strathearn.

desire to serve the God of his fathers. At Bethel, during Jacob's dream of the ladder reaching into heaven, God extended to Jacob the same covenant that he had made with Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 28:10–15; 48:3–4). Apparently, Jacob initially had some reservations about committing himself when he declared, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, . . . *then* shall the Lord be my God” (Gen. 28:20–21, italics added). The “if . . . then” statement suggests that Jacob wanted God to prove himself before he bound himself by choosing Yahweh as his God. Years later at the Jabbok River, however, as Jacob and his family journeyed back to the covenant land of Canaan, it becomes clear he had then decided that the covenant had become something that he actively sought for. As he wrestled with a divine being, Jacob declared, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” (Gen. 32:26). As part of the covenant making, Jacob's name was changed to Israel. This divine experience was so significant for Jacob that he named the place “Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Gen. 32:30), and later he told his posterity that it was here that he was “redeemed from all evil” (Gen. 48:16). After these experiences, Jacob traveled down the Jabbok valley and then reentered the promised covenant land where he “erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel” (Gen. 33:20), “El is the god of Israel.” At this point in the story, there is only one Israel—and that is Jacob. This altar thus became the visible symbol that, in a land where many gods were worshipped, Jacob had chosen El to be *his* God.

The discussion of Jacob's spiritual transformation then became the background to remind students that God continues to extend these covenant invitations in our day. It was an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the ways God invites each of us to enter into a covenant with him. Ultimately, like Jacob, each of us has to decide for ourselves how we will respond to those invitations. In the end, the important thing to remember is not whether our parents or grandparents have entered into the covenant; rather, like Jacob, it is whether *we* are willing to make that covenant our own.

Skinner: Three memories from our Jerusalem Center experiences over the last thirty years have stood out to me and my wife, Janet. We first went to the Jerusalem Center to teach fall semester 1990, when the first Gulf War was threatening to break out. We lived outside the Center in the Givat Ha-Mivtar neighborhood and walked or drove to the Center. Because full-fledged war involving Israel became increasingly certain, the students did not come to Jerusalem winter semester. After Scud missiles started flying

from Iraq into Israel in January 1991, we moved from our sealed room in our home into the Center for easier access to the nicer bomb shelters there, the entrance into which became a twice-daily routine. It was at that point we became well acquainted with the Center's security personnel, who left a lasting impression on our family. The kindness of the Center staff helped us feel genuinely watched over during that difficult and nerve-wracking time. Our six children, ages two to fourteen, were especially charmed by the then-young security guard named Bassam Abu Ghanam.

Over the years, we have shared in his life's milestones—traditional betrothal, marriage, and children—and enjoyed wonderful, informative discussions about society, religious devotion, and raising our families. I will never forget talking with Bassam in more recent years about helping our children stay religiously grounded in a world that seemed to be going downhill quickly. Bassam told us of an experience with one of his sons who questioned why he needed to pray five times a day (which committed Muslims do). Bassam told us he answered his son using an analogy the son could appreciate. Bassam said to him, "How many times a day do you eat?" The son answered, "Three, sometimes more." Bassam then said to him, "You don't need to eat that many times a day to live. But you do it because it's part of your routine, it's part of your culture, it's important to you, and it helps you stay physically strong. Prayer is even more important because it helps you stay strong religiously, and it's part of who you are." Sadly, Bassam suffered from kidney disease, and it was a great loss to the Jerusalem Center and to us personally when he passed away. This is but one example of many, many others in our association with the Jerusalem Center staff. Each has left a significant impression on me and my family.

Other powerful impressions stemming from our Jerusalem Center experiences have come from the insightful and caring students with whom we have associated. One example involved one of our young men at the Christian baptismal site of Yardenit, where the Jordan River exits the Sea of Galilee. After some class instruction, one student was standing by himself, overlooking the baptismal area and reflecting on Jesus's own baptism. He happened to see a young foreign family—father, mother, son—dressed in white clothing, excitedly hoping to be baptized. Their guide told them they could go down into the water. The father, with trepidation, asked, "Don't we need a priest?" The guide answered, "No, it's self-service! You just go down and baptize yourself."

Still in a quandary, the husband asked again if they still didn't need a priest. Annoyed, the guide said, "Okay," looked around, and saw our

student who was dressed in a suit and tie (having just come from sacrament meeting elsewhere). Their eyes met, the guide looked him up and down and asked, “Are you a priest?” Our student said he knew what the guide was going to ask him. The thought came to him, “Well, yes, you are a priest. You hold the true priesthood and you actually have real authority from God.” After a moment he answered, that, yes, he was a priest. The guide then asked him to say a few words to the family. Scrambling in his mind what he could say without violating the nonproselytizing agreement, he turned to Matthew 3 from the Bible he was holding, read the description of Jesus’s own baptism—which his class had just discussed—and told the family that when we choose to be baptized we are following the example of Jesus to be obedient to our Heavenly Father, and we are showing Jesus that we will follow him throughout our lives. The family looked up at him with big smiles, thanked him, went into the water, and baptized themselves.

Our student made no mention of his religious affiliation, violated no promise he had made not to talk about the LDS faith, but felt impressed he had done the right thing in an appropriate way. This is but one example of the many honorable ways our students have spiritually enriched the lives of others and given back to the land that has come to mean so much to so many of them.

In addition to having these wonderful memories, I can say that the Center brings the scriptures alive. I have seen in my mind’s eye, many times on field trip sites, the Savior teaching and preaching and performing miracles. I well remember being with a group of students as we went to Shepherds’ Field. They were singing the songs associated with Jesus’s birth in Bethlehem. On this particular occasion, they were singing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” as the sun was setting and the church bells across the valley in Bethlehem were chiming. Then, as if on cue, one of the Bedouin family members who lived in that area walked up the west slope of the hill on which we were sitting with a flock of sheep trailing behind him. He walked past us. The cameras were flashing as he walked his sheep down the east side of the hill. As if staged, there was a straggler, a lamb that had become separated from the flock because of the camera flashes. As he stood in front of this crowd of photographers—I don’t know what fear feels like from a sheep’s point of view, but it sure looked like fear to me—he was clearly confused, looking to the right, to the left, and behind, but he could not find the flock. Then from over the hill came the voice of the shepherd, calling to this little sheep. The ears of the lamb perked up, and he looked in that direction as the

shepherd came, picked him up, cradled him in his arms, and said a few words, in Arabic I suppose. I don't know, but I believe that the shepherd was offering some calming and comforting sentiments. To be honest, I also think that the shepherd was hamming it up a bit for the group that was taking all the pictures. But I will never forget the very real feeling that came over me as I thought of the Savior's voice in place of the Bedouin herder's, the voice of the One who is not just a good shepherd but *the* Good Shepherd. These types of moments come, not infrequently, when you are in the Holy Land.

Brown: The setting was the public gallery of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. The speaker was the deputy prime minister of the state of Israel, Yigael Yadin. The audience consisted of the sixty students of the early 1978 Jerusalem program.

During his lifetime, Yigael Yadin had risen to become the chief of the general staff of the fledgling Israeli Army when it was fighting for its national life in the 1948–49 war of independence. Thereafter, he had distinguished himself as Israel's most prominent archaeologist during an academic career at the Hebrew University. Recently, he had turned to politics, and his newly formed party had won enough seats in the parliament to become the main partner with the party of Menachem Begin, then the prime minister, to form a coalition government. Professor Yadin had come to the campus of Brigham Young University almost a year earlier to give a pair of lectures: one on his most famous archaeological excavation at the mountain fortress Masada near the Dead Sea, the other on the Temple Scroll, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls that he had recently edited and published in both Hebrew and English. Now he sat before the sixty students and a few faculty members and spouses. He was openly talking about the major issues that the Israeli government was wrestling with at that moment.

The question, of course, was, How did it come about that this important man had ties to BYU, both in Provo and in Jerusalem? The short answer is that he had spent a sabbatical year at Brown University (1969–70) and the department chair had assigned me to be his teaching assistant. During that year, I became well acquainted with this unusual man of enormous capacity. I helped him in the classes he taught. I assisted him when he gave public lectures. One of my main jobs was to run the slide projector when he was to show slides in the classroom or at a public presentation. One incident includes a bit of humor, at my expense.

Professor Yadin was to give an illustrated lecture on Masada. His presentation was in the large hall at Pembroke College in Providence, Rhode

Island. As customary, he asked me to run the slide projector. By now, I thought that I was a groovy projector operator—top of the line. He took a few minutes to introduce his topic to the very big audience and then turned down the lights for the slide show that would accompany the rest of his lecture. All went swimmingly until I showed his slide of a famous aerial view of Masada with its surrounding walls. The slide was encased in a metal holder. This was a very early equivalent of Powerpoint, complete with slides made of photographic film. The images were projected onto a screen at the front of the room. I would slide a tray back and forth, a tray that held one slide on each end. When Prof. Yadin clicked his little cricket-sounding clicker, I would shove the tray gently so that the next slide appeared on the screen, and I would remove the one that had just been showing, replacing it with the next one to be projected. And so on. But this aerial-view slide became stuck.

I was standing up in this sea of people who were all sitting down. No one paid any attention to me until that slide became stuck. While the next slide was showing, I was trying my best to remove the stuck slide so that I could put in the next one and have it ready for Dr. Yadin's clicker. It didn't work. He clicked. Onto the screen went the same aerial-view image as I tried to move my fingers quickly to put the next slide into the other end of the tray and flip it quickly onto the screen. The first time I did this, no one seemed to notice much. By now, I was trying my hardest to remove the aerial-view slide and, as I did so, the image on the screen began to jump and move with real intent. But the slide was stuck. By this point, all eyes in the hall were turned on me. No one was listening to Dr. Yadin. No one was seeing the image on the screen. No one had any other interest than me.

Dr. Yadin was no dummy. He figured it all out in an instant, as if this sort of thing had happened before. So he made a funny remark about the re-appearing slide, everyone laughed, and with perspiration pouring off my brow, I kept showing that slide every other image as I tried my best to get the proper slide showing when he wanted it. Somehow, it all worked out. It was just that everyone had to become accustomed to that aerial-view slide appearing every other move. When it was all over, Dr. Yadin came to me and the machine to try to dig his metal-cased slide out of the tray. As I recall, the slide was a total loss. It was an experience that I have never forgotten, standing in that big hall filled with guests who all turned their attention to me for those embarrassing moments.

In 1976, after I had joined the BYU Ancient Scripture faculty, I learned that the university was looking for a good forum speaker for

the spring term of 1977. I knew just the man for the job. Through my department chair and dean, I was put in touch with the administrator who oversaw invitations to off-campus speakers. By good fortune, he agreed that Professor Yadin was a suitable person to invite and asked me to contact him about his plans for May–June 1977. Dr. Yadin quickly agreed to come. I was asked to be his host. We wanted him to give two lectures—one on his excavations at Masada and the other on the recently published Temple Scroll. The first presentation to the student body went as I had expected. Clear and to the point. It was the second that drew notable interest. Specifically inviting faculty, staff, and people from off-campus, we had placed Prof. Yadin in a spot wherein he was confronted by a barrage of questions about ancient temples and their sacred rites. He had never encountered this kind of intense interest in temple matters in all his years of teaching and lecturing. But that was not the only memorable moment for him.

I took him to meet Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. During their conversation, Elder Hunter mentioned that he had just finished reading a book on Holy Land archaeology written by one of Dr. Yadin's colleagues. So the conversation moved to archaeological topics. As soon as we left Elder Hunter's office, Professor Yadin turned to me and said that he had never met a churchman who held such a refined interest in archaeology as Elder Hunter did. He was impressed.

After my family and I had arrived in Jerusalem with those sixty students in January 1978, I called Dr. Yadin. We were invited to his home. It was there that he suggested I bring the students to the Knesset and he would spend time with them, telling them about how the government functioned, what issues were under discussion, and answering questions. David Galbraith, the director of the program at the time, arranged for buses, and we went to visit the Knesset, the most important deliberative body in the country.

For me, this experience underscored the importance of relationships, even in higher education. Nowhere have these personal relationships and unanticipated or unlooked-for opportunities—between our family and our students; among the faculty teaching at the Center when we have been there; between our family and local Center employees; between me and my wife, Gayle, and friends and professional colleagues in the local communities—been more important for me than they have been in Jerusalem.

Stratford: One of the greatest lessons that Jerusalem has to offer is the idea that getting to know something takes effort. In Jerusalem, history

seems to lie open to anyone, but the acute and interested observer will find much more. Consider just the walls. From the seventh-floor plaza of the Jerusalem Center you can look across the Kidron Valley and see the walls of Jerusalem. They seem to represent New Testament times, and they partially do. While most visible parts of the walls are not Herodian, in some places the layers that Herod built are visible. Some work done by his successors is partially visible as well. If you go to the southwest corner of the Haram esh-Sharif, you can see what the Romans did to Jerusalem when they conquered it. And you can, if you are careful, find evidence of the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls by the Roman emperors Hadrian and Diocletian, as well as plenty of later additions by the Abbasid Arabs. One can find visible repairs to the same walls made by the Fatimid Arabs after the earthquake of 1033. And the Fatimids again made improvements as they prepared for the Crusaders to arrive in 1099. When the Muslim leader Saladin took Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187, he let the walls remain in disrepair, which can also be evident to the careful observer. Later, between 1535 and 1538, the Ottoman Turkish sultan Suleiman the Magnificent created the walls that define the current boundaries of the Old City to this day.

All of these layers are discernible if you know what to look for. And there is still more history to be found in, around, and under Jerusalem if you are willing to dig deep enough: Persian, Hasmonean, Israelite, and remains from the Bronze Age, layers that go back five thousand years. To appreciate these things, however, you have to leave the Jerusalem Center, and you might have to get dirty. You might have to get wet. In Jerusalem, the opportunity to understand the complexity of history, of both individual histories and the histories of places and peoples, is for those willing to make the effort to uncover them. But it's worth it.

The walls of Jerusalem are complex and bear the marks of many experiences. To appreciate those experiences, however, you may need a guide, and you'll need to get closer. When one arrives in Jerusalem, there is sometimes a rush to walk where Jesus walked. A path to Christ will lead one on manifold and varied roads, however, roads that require us to appreciate the many inhabitants and conquerors of Jerusalem. Jesus suffered for them all, and he understood them all. If we take seriously the call of discipleship, then Jerusalem is one place where we can make the effort needed to understand humanity as Christ did, where we can appreciate the complexity of history and experience. And appreciating the complexity of Jerusalem's walls can be a step toward appreciating how complex we all are. It takes some effort. But it's worth it.

Jackson: One of the remarkable things about the Center has been its ability, semester after semester, to have programs that bless lives in a very difficult area of the world. I'm convinced it's not by chance. The following account is but one of many that could be told about why the Center has been successful.

On January 24, 2011, we arrived in Cairo, Egypt, with ninety-two Jerusalem Center-affiliated people—students, teachers and their spouses, volunteer service couples, and administrators—to begin an eight-day tour there. We had been alerted by a Latter-day Saint official at the U.S. embassy in Cairo that the following day would be Police Day, a day to honor the police. Because most Egyptians didn't like the police, demonstrations were anticipated, and we were cautioned to be careful.

The following day, we visited the pyramids of Giza and Saqqara, some of the greatest wonders of human creation. That evening, we flew to Luxor. Meanwhile in Cairo, demonstrations protesting police brutality were beginning. The next day, we visited the Valley of the Kings and saw the wonderful tombs of the Pharaohs and then sailed on the Nile, relaxing on the calm waters as a perfect way to end a seemingly perfect day. Not everything was calm, however. In the afternoon, I started to receive phone calls from Eran Hayet, executive director of the Jerusalem Center, who was concerned about us: Cairo was engulfed in demonstrations that had turned into antigovernment riots, with security forces responding with a show of force. We watched on CNN in our hotel, and the parents of eighty BYU students were watching CNN as well.

Luxor is a small city surrounded by some of the greatest wonders of ancient Egypt. It is far from the noisy metropolis of Cairo, and for us it seemed a world away from the strife that was taking place there. The next day, we visited the indescribable temples of Karnak and Luxor and took a peaceful horse-drawn carriage ride across town. The administrative team in Jerusalem and Provo and our contact at the U.S. embassy in Cairo were not feeling that peace, however, nor were the parents of our students, who watched as the demonstrations in Cairo became increasingly violent.

That evening we boarded the night train for Cairo. We had no clear idea what our itinerary was going to be once we arrived, but we knew that we didn't want to be stranded in Luxor if Egypt were engulfed in civil strife. We also knew that our suburban Cairo hotel, with a large, beautiful green garden surrounded by a wall, would be a safe haven for us.

We left Luxor just in time, as demonstrations against the government began there soon after we boarded the train. Shortly after we arrived in

Cairo, the government suspended train service. Later that day, it shut down the internet and mobile phone services. The unrest in Cairo had become a full-scale effort to overthrow the government, which we, our students' parents, administrators in Jerusalem and Provo, and Church officials watched unfold live on television.

Our original itinerary had us scheduled to visit the Cairo Egyptian Museum, one of the greatest museums in the world, and then spend the rest of the day in downtown Cairo. However, we clearly had to avoid going downtown and decided instead to visit Dashur, a complex of pyramids far from downtown. Our visit was amazing, in part because we were almost the only people at the site. The police guards had abandoned their posts and fled. We saw the pyramids and then walked a kilometer across the desert to a remarkable ancient temple where tourists never go. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Because it was Friday, a day when the Church holds sabbath services in Muslim countries, we returned to our hotel and held a sacrament meeting.

One of our guides went downtown that evening to help protect the Egyptian Museum from looters. He was shot in the leg. On out-of-country field trips, we always travel with a doctor, and he attended to our wounded friend. (We're well prepared for medical emergencies, but we normally don't anticipate bullet wounds.) We stayed in contact with Jerusalem and our contact at the U.S. embassy in Cairo the best we could. Eran stayed in contact with Provo and Salt Lake, and the Jerusalem Center's Provo office stayed in contact with concerned parents. But we soon found that we had far better intelligence than the U.S. government or others outside of Egypt had. Our guides and bus drivers were in constant contact with taxi drivers, truckers, bus drivers, and people on the streets, so they knew which roads were open and the locations where there might be trouble.

The next day we left Cairo for the Sinai, driving across Cairo on an elevated freeway that was eerily empty. We passed burned-out cars and trucks from the violence of previous days. The security guard on one of our buses got out his automatic weapon, put the clip into it, and kept his hand on it until we were safely out of town. The guard on another of our buses responded in a different way. He disassembled his weapon, hid its parts, and borrowed a shirt from one of our students so he wouldn't be dressed like a cop. Soon we were out of the city and in the desert. We passed through several military roadblocks with tanks and a strong military presence and arrived safely at our lodgings at the base of Mount Sinai.

Very early the next morning, we hiked Mount Sinai to witness the sunrise. It was an amazing experience, but I suspected that it would probably be a long time before a BYU Jerusalem Center group would have that experience again. That was January 2011, and the Center hasn't taken a group of students to Mount Sinai since then. After descending from Mount Sinai, we immediately left for the border with Israel. Usually crossing from Egypt to Israel is a test of patience, so we were pleasantly surprised that both the Egyptians and the Israelis pushed us through as fast as they could, fearing that at any moment they would receive orders to close the border. We got through just in time; later that day, the border was closed.

On almost every day of our trip, we were one day ahead of disaster. Had we started a day later, we would have had significant problems everywhere. As it turned out, we never were in a dangerous place or a dangerous situation. In addition, the unique circumstances of our trip made it one of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences of our lives. It wasn't until the next morning in Jerusalem, when I received emails from Elder Holland and BYU President Samuelson, that I fully realized the intense anxiety others had felt because of us and the magnitude of the prayers that had been offered in our behalf.

The uprising in Egypt continued. Twelve days after we crossed the border back into Israel, Egypt's president was removed by military force.

Elder Holland has spoken about the miracles that attended the construction of the Jerusalem Center. Those miracles did not end when the building was finished. Do I believe that God provided protective power for our group? I do. During our whole experience—even with the responsibilities my colleagues and I had for the well-being of ninety-two Latter-day Saints in a difficult situation—I never once felt a moment of doubt that all would be well.



The Oasis serving area. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.



The Oasis seating area. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

Student Panel Discussion

Professor David Rolph Seely, moderator

April Giddings Cobb

Julie Jenkins Elcock

Heidi Hatch Gilbert

Christopher Meldrum

Raven Alard Ngatuvai

Richard Reber

Seely

The Jerusalem Center has lots of different functions, but it was made for students. Our family has been there both at times when the Jerusalem Center was closed to students and when it had students in residence. There's nothing emptier or sadder than the Jerusalem Center without students.

Students come to the Center with different ambitions. They come as young people to have fun. They come as travelers to find adventure, exploring the foreign and exotic places in the Holy Land. They come to learn about the ancient Near East and the history, culture, and religious beliefs of the Christians, Jews, and Muslims. They come as guests to encounter the gracious peoples who inhabit the Holy Land. They come as students to read and study the scriptures. Significantly, they come as pilgrims searching for experience and insight into the sacred, with hopes that their hearts can be changed. They come to walk in the footsteps of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Kings David and Solomon; the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lehi; and the Apostles Peter and Paul. Most importantly, they come as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to heed his admonition, as he told his ancient Apostles, "Come and see" (John 1:39). Our students come to see and hear and smell and touch and feel and experience the Spirit. They come to the land where he walked in order to learn to walk in his footsteps.

Today, in the spirit of pilgrimage, we have gathered to share our stories, our stories of encountering the Holy Land through the Jerusalem Center. We are going to start this panel discussion by introducing ourselves. We have three students from the Jerusalem Center programs

from 1990 through 2000 and three from programs after 2007. I will introduce myself and then ask each of them to introduce themselves.

I'm David Seely. I teach ancient scripture at BYU, and I love students and the Jerusalem Center program. My relationship with BYU's Jerusalem Center goes back a bit. In 1978, I wrote a letter to a charming young woman I was smitten with at work, and the address said "Jerusalem Study Abroad, Ramat Rachel." Miraculously, she wrote me back, and since then we have been to the Holy Land together with our children five times to experience pilgrimages with the students at the Center. We have helped shepherd fifteen student groups, and we have both served as Center faculty. Each of our four children has had a chance to be a student at the Center. We go because we love the land, we love the scriptures, and we love the students, and in the process of this experience, we have learned to better love each other.

Cobb

I'm April Giddings Cobb, and I went on the Jerusalem Center program in 1993. I don't really remember why I wanted to go. It was really overshadowed by the fact that I didn't think I would be able to go because I had an inactive family. I didn't think that my dad would want me to go or pay for me to go. So I fasted and prayed and was super scared to approach him. But, without hesitation, he said that I could go and he would pay. So it was another "Jerusalem miracle," as Professor Jeff Chadwick would say. And it turned out to be one of the best things that has happened to me.

Elcock

Marhaba—Shalom! My name is Julie Jenkins Elcock. My first introduction to the Holy Land was tied to my parents. My father worked with the Church Educational System, and he and my mother went to Jerusalem when I was age four. There was a lot of talk while I was growing up about the Holy Land and the biblical sites. I had an infatuation with the pyramids in Egypt, which they also visited. My infatuation turned into an acceptance letter to the winter 1994 program. Ironically, the trip to Egypt was cancelled, but Israel did not disappoint. It exceeded all my expectations.

Gilbert

My name is Heidi Hatch Gilbert. I am from Idaho and now live in Orem, Utah. I went to Jerusalem in 2008 because of a strong impression that I was supposed to go. My travel experience at the time consisted of

camping in the mountains of Idaho—obviously quite limited. I was in my last year at BYU and had a friend who had recently come back from the Center. As he talked about his Jerusalem Center experience, I was so captivated! I hadn't heard about Jerusalem Center programs. I asked question after question, and for six hours he showed me pictures and shared his experiences, and I couldn't get enough. As he talked, I knew in my heart that I was supposed to find a way to go. I was concerned about the finances, but doors were opened to make it possible. When God gives us direction, he truly does provide a way.

Meldrum

My name is Christopher Meldrum. The reason I attended the Jerusalem Center is that I've always been a history buff and have loved seeing the places where great historical events happened. I was a Classics major at BYU, so when I heard the Center was reopening, the opportunity to be in the Holy Land and see some of the great sites associated with the Bible and Greco-Roman history was just too irresistible to pass up. Studying at the Jerusalem Center went straight to the top of the list of things I was going to do before I left BYU. Furthermore, I figured that if I had to take a New Testament class to graduate, what better place to do it than in the Holy Land itself? So I jumped at the opportunity to submit my application. It was my last semester at BYU, and this was a wonderful end to my undergraduate experience. I was there in the summer of 2010 and was fortunate to be among the second summer groups to have the full semester-long program, for which I will always be thankful, as it really did make a difference having that much time to be at the Center.

Ngatuvai

My name is Raven Ngatuvai. My maiden name was Alard. I am from Provo, Utah. From afar, Jerusalem seemed very exotic, and from a young age I've wanted to go to exotic places. I was fascinated with ancient civilizations, particularly in the Middle East, and Egypt specifically. It was clear that I would need to leave Provo to go somewhere like that. When I heard about the Jerusalem Center program, I realized what the BYU welcome sign "The world is our campus" really meant and was determined to go. With great gratitude, I went in 2009.

Reber

My name is Rick Reber, and I live in Sandy, Utah. If I were to be honest as to why I went on study abroad, it was because there was a three-to-one

girl-to-guy ratio. Just kidding. I actually saw a picture of the Jerusalem Center on a brochure that a missionary companion of mine showed me right after we'd returned from our missions. He said, "Let's go here," and I was drawn to the Jerusalem Center from that moment on. He wasn't able to go, and I shelved the idea for about a year. I had another friend ask, "Have you ever heard of the BYU Jerusalem Center?" I said, "Yeah, I have, and I want to go." He said, "Well, let's go." We then decided we probably couldn't afford it, so we would apply for student financial aid. If we got some, we would go. Unfortunately, neither one of us got financial aid, and it looked like the semester abroad was going to be delayed again. I really felt compelled to not give up, however, and soon the Spirit was whispering, "Rick, make it happen." I decided to make it happen and went in the fall of 1993.



Seely

As you know, in the Jerusalem Center program, we stay for the semester in a beautiful building on Mount Scopus. We live, we eat, we work, we play, we study, we go to church, we socialize in the Center. Would each of you share two or three of your favorite memories about the Center itself?

Cobb

My favorite memories from the Jerusalem Center aren't so much specific things, because I can think of a laundry list of all the unique activities at the Center—I think it was more the way things were done. Activities at the Center were much different than living in Provo and going to school at the BYU campus. In Jerusalem, it was common that when we would go to a dance, go to a talent show, or go out to press olives, our professors and often their families were there. There was something really special about the way we bonded through these activities in such a unique setting. It was kind of like being on the Love Boat, but you couldn't pair off. Everybody did everything together. You ate at the captain's table, so to speak. I loved that aspect of the Center. When I returned to campus and would take a class from a Jerusalem Center professor, that special bond with all the members of the class wasn't present. I then realized how lucky we had been. The whole experience promoted bonding and the feeling that nobody was left out. Everybody was always invited to each activity no matter what was going on. No one had to feel uneasy about whether they were welcome. Nobody was ever excluded.

There was no awkwardness. We were all on that boat together, and we were all going toward the same destination. That made it really special.

Elcock

For me, the experiences in the Jerusalem Center had to do with people. I remember standing in the Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv in a sea of 170 students. I remember thinking, “How in the world am I going to get to know these people who seem so different from me, let alone their names?” Fast forward four months. Toward the end of the winter semester, we had an activity in the Forum where someone in front would hold up items borrowed from students: a ball cap, a tee shirt, tennis shoes. We were to guess who the item belonged to. One by one, as each item was displayed, all the students would quickly yell out in unison the name of the owner. This was a testament to how much time we shared with each other and how well we knew each other by the end of the program. These strangers whom I thought I had nothing in common with at the beginning became my friends, my confidants, and my future roommates, and truly this was what shaped my experiences at the Jerusalem Center. It was the people.

Gilbert

One of the best life lessons I have learned happened during those four months in the Center with our group of eighty-one students: when we give people more than one chance to really get to know who they are, there is something to treasure in every human. At the Center, you live together, eat together, go to class together, go on excursions and field trips together—you’re literally always together. This was the best environment to foster relationships with people you wouldn’t probably normally connect with, largely because you were basically forced to spend time with the entire group, regardless of first impressions or small irritations with people. You continued to give every person second and third and seventh chances, and because of that you began to see past each other’s quirks, to even appreciate those quirks, and to allow real friendships to happen. It’s powerful!

And, of course, we had so many spiritual experiences at the Center; how could we not? One that has stayed with me was spending an hour learning from Professor Andrew Skinner about the triclinium (the table with three reclining couches used at the Last Supper). That one hour taught me much more about the Savior than merely reading the account in the New Testament as I learned about the significance of

what happened the night of the Last Supper, down to where each person sat, what they did, and why that mattered. The powerful teaching of the Savior to Peter, the just-as-powerful example of the Savior's interactions with Judas, and what each position at the table teaches us about the person lying there—yes, lying there. What I learned was both educational and testimony building. The Center is amazing because just about everything we learned was both educational and testimony building.

Meldrum

One of the memories I will always cherish about the Jerusalem Center was that feeling of complete exhaustion as, having walked from Damascus Gate to the Center's lower gate, my friends and I then sprinted up thirteen flights of stairs to make it to the Oasis for the last ten minutes it was open for dinner. We were always hot and sweaty and arrived in the nick of time. But to sit down to eat completely exhausted after an exciting day of adventures in the Old City provided us with a feeling of accomplishment that was complete and utter bliss. I will also remember fondly the quizzical look I and a number of students received from the faculty when, after they kindly pushed back the start time of our final exams to give the whole student body more time to study and prepare, we told them we were ready to take the test at the original start time so we could get out into the city to explore. Their faces conveyed a sense of complete and utter bewilderment combined with an immense pride at the dedication and excitement of their students on that occasion. Nor, I think, can anyone forget the feeling of jetlag after arriving in the Holy Land and how exhausted we were that first evening, as well as how quickly we proceeded to wake up to the unfamiliar sound of the call to prayer in the early hours of the morning during the first few weeks.

I enjoyed many of the cultural events that were hosted at the Center, from a re-creation of a Jewish Passover Seder with our Judaism professor, to an Arab cultural night with our Arab professor complete with a call to prayer. It was a treat to be able to perform Pachelbel's *Canon in D* for our local neighbors and friends at our closing formal talent show on the Center's beautiful Steinway piano and in front of the famous window that frames a view of the Old City and Dome of the Rock shrine, as well as to laugh at many fond memories and inside jokes at the informal student talent show and closing activity. Of course, the academic opportunities the Center provided were top-notch as well. The opportunity to listen to lectures by individuals on every side of the political spectrum on the issue of Palestinian-Israeli relations helped us better understand

the complexity of the issue and appreciate the nuance and importance of each voice. Personally, I relished the opportunity to help organize and lead group study sessions for some of our classes. Nor was I alone in these efforts, since there was a real sense of comradery and of wanting to help each other succeed among the students. I will also always treasure the opportunity I had to assist Kent Brown with his translation of the Gospel of Luke while I was at the Center, and the excitement that I and another student felt every morning as we met with him to eagerly report some new discovery that we had personally learned in the course of our translating. This is just an example of my interactions with all the faculty, who loved sharing their interests, knowledge, and excitement for their material with us.

I also cherished the wonderful spiritual events that we were privileged to participate in while at the Center. These included our fireside recreating the triclinium setting of the Last Supper and early previews of BYU TV's *Messiah: Behold the Lamb of God*. Of course, who could forget getting to know the members of the local branch, participating with them in Sunday School, and peering out the large window in the Center's auditorium at the famous view of Jerusalem during sacrament meeting? Each was a memorable experience that made the opportunity of living in the Center all the more remarkable and special.

However, I agree with all the other comments that it is really the informal interactions with fellow students that are perhaps the most memorable. One of the things that was fun was going from not knowing anyone and being complete strangers at the beginning of the semester to feeling like you had known these people forever by the end of the program. It was fun to get to learn their personalities on a deeper level and grow to appreciate their talents and many skills. It was always a delight to discover another student who had similar interests—a true moment where, as C. S. Lewis says, you realize, “I thought I was the only one!” and fall into an instant friendship. As a result, it wasn't just the great formal activities the Center had, but some of the impromptu things we were able to organize because of these relationships that were memorable as well: opportunities like deciding to watch the corresponding *Indiana Jones* movies before the field trips to Egypt and Petra or planning field trips to Eilat or Tel Aviv and other sites near Jerusalem that were not included in our field trip itinerary.

I was there in the summer, so together we students decided to put on an impromptu Fourth of July carnival, complete with games and apple bobbing. For the more patriotic moments, we moved indoors where

one student provided us with a recitation of excerpts of Kennedy's inaugural address. I still remember the chills that went down my spine as he recited the words, "My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man," and, "With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking his blessing and his help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own." The words took on a whole new meaning in the Jerusalem Center and after having spent the previous months in the Holy Land. All these experiences were memorable because they were really born out of us students ourselves and reflected the strong sense of community, comradery, and friendship we developed at the Center.

Ngatuvai

For me, the Jerusalem Center architecture was so inspired; it was meant for learning. I felt that at any time of day. My husband also went to Jerusalem in 2013, and we can point out the rooms we each lived in from a picture of the Center by identifying the balcony. A favorite experience for me was to be on my room balcony in the early morning or late at night, looking out at the landscape and, simultaneously, looking in at myself. I could feel such a depth of connection with my Savior that I have probably not felt again other than on my mission or when having a child.

Reber

A favorite activity was attending sacrament meeting in the upper auditorium. Even twenty-six years later, I bow my head during the sacrament and often visualize looking out those giant windows and through the beautiful stone arches at the Old City. It was my favorite place in the Center. I will never forget the sounds of the organ or the Spirit I felt in that room. I'm sure there are many who felt the same way. Also, activities like the student talent shows, eating in the Oasis with friends, or playing basketball games in the gymnasium are full of good memories. My classmates were the best! It was absolutely fabulous.

Seely

We too have favorite memories of life in the Center. In 1990, several years after his first wife's death, President Howard W. Hunter remarried and came to the Jerusalem Center on his honeymoon. We had this group of four sweet boys who serenaded the newlyweds each night.



The gymnasium at the Jerusalem Center. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

(These serenaders actually made it into President Hunter's biography.) Another favorite experience was Halloween because you never knew what the students would think up. Once a group of students dressed up in painted cardboard boxes like Herodian stones. They came out and piled themselves up to make a Herodian wall and then called the nearby Roman soldier to come and knock them over. A favorite time was when the sun set over Jerusalem each evening with all the students out on their balconies or on the seventh-level plaza or in the gardens pretending to read scriptures but in fact just looking at the beauty and the grandeur of Jerusalem.



Seely

In connection with our study at the Jerusalem Center, we do intensive field trips. At the end of the program when you look at your journal, you realize that you have seen the Holy Land as the Lord said to Abraham in Genesis, "northward, southward, eastward, and westward" (Gen. 13:14). Would you share your favorite two or three memories of field trips?

Cobb

My husband and I were recently on a twenty-five-year reunion trip, and it was phenomenal. On that trip, we revisited a place that brought back so many memories: Ein Gedi, an oasis near Masada and the Dead Sea. There is nothing else around. It is so lush and beautiful, and there are waterfalls. Back when we were in our twenties, we were practically kids. Having water around, of course, everybody wanted to play, and we were so excited about it. We were not only playing in the water, but we were climbing up on the rocks. I guess this was forbidden, and there was a very angry park ranger who confronted us. Our beloved professor, Paul Peterson, who later returned as a Center administrator, in all his dignity, vigorously defended us to this park ranger. It was not the first but the second time that day that he almost got in a fist fight. The story continues because Professor Brent Top was provoking Professor Peterson and used Professor Peterson's own words by saying, "A lesser man will not get in the water." Professor Peterson was probably the only one not in the water. He was wearing his signature Levi's and immediately, without missing a beat, dropped his clipboard and just walked fully clothed, straight into the waterfall because he would not be a lesser man.

Elcock

In 1994, we hiked Sinai in the very early morning hours. It was cold and windy, and my knees were achy, but I was determined to make it up early enough to see the sun rise. Turns out my knees held up and I was the first girl up the mountain. It was incredible to watch the sun come up over the Sinai desert to the east and to realize that that was the same place where Moses likely encountered the sun rising and where he received the Ten Commandments. It's these kinds of moments and field trips that strengthened my testimony that the great Jehovah of the Old Testament is that same God who today speaks to our prophet.

Probably one of my favorite experiences occurred recently, when we went back in August for a twenty-five-year reunion trip. We had dinner with our Bedouin bus driver, Mahmud Hazraht. We ate dinner outside his home with his family and grandchildren. His wife made a traditional meal for sixty of us. We watched as Mahmud transformed from bus driver to Bedouin sheik as he put on his kaffiyeh. We had immediate respect as he explained how he ministers to over ten thousand people in his tribe. He brought out a coffee grinder or *mehbash* that had been in his family for over four hundred years. The grinder was

used to grind coffee but was also used as a percussion instrument. Using the ancient grinder, he made a rhythmic welcoming tune, the sound of hospitality. To spend that time with Mahmud and his lovely family will not soon be forgotten.

Gilbert

Sinai was incredible. I also loved Egypt. I particularly remember when going to the tombs and the temples as an endowed member of the Church, my jaw dropped because I was seeing things I didn't think I should be seeing on the walls and ceilings. It was incredible! Learning from our professors as they taught us on-site about such ancient history blew my mind. Here in the U.S., 300 or 400 years is old, but there you're at sites where there are temples well past 2,000 or 3,000 years old. I remember sitting in a Holy of Holies at one of the Egyptian temples where Professor Skinner made a profound and thought-provoking comment about how we were literally seeing fragments of the truth. He said that it's obvious from what we were seeing from those ancient civilizations that Adam and Eve really did start with all the truth. Over time that truth has been fragmented, but we see it pop up in all the different major religions of the world.

Also, the Jerusalem experience isn't complete without the Galilee. It was just so incredible! I loved that when you were on or near the Sea of Galilee, anywhere you looked you were looking at a story from the New Testament, seeing what Jesus saw. Before going there, I had never realized that Galilee is where the Savior actually lived and taught most of his life. I remember sunrises and sunsets at Galilee—all in all, such an incredible experience.

Meldrum

All the field trips were memorable in different ways. I loved the ruins at Jerash and Caesarea Maritima as well as the excitement of rafting down the Jordan River and hiking through Dan. It was surreal to stand on Masada, and I cherished seeing the Mount of Transfiguration and reading the scriptures at the Synagogue Church in Nazareth or at the ruins of the synagogue in Capernaum. I will always remember sprinting ahead of the group in excitement upon seeing the tip of the Treasury over the next ridge in Petra, as well as turning around in my seat at the end of our visit and seeing an entire busload of young and healthy college students completely exhausted and asleep due to the heat and the

day's excitement. However, of all the field trips, two really stand out for their lasting impact.

One was going to Mount Sinai in Egypt. It was amazing to get up at 4:00 a.m., long before dawn, to see the whole Milky Way laid out like I had never seen it before. My mind immediately recalled the scripture when God shows Moses the whole of his creation. I think it is the closest I have ever been to an experience like that. We then had to hike up the mountain while dodging the large number of camels carrying tourists who opted not to make the hike. However, it was worth it to see an amazing sunrise. For me, the real highlight came afterward when we then followed the path down to St. Catherine's Monastery. At that marvelous site, we saw a remarkable museum with some of the treasures of the monastery. Included were a copy of the Bible—the Codex Sinaiticus—that Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, the great historian of Christianity, prepared for the Emperor Constantine and the enchanting and beautiful icons that predate the eighth-century Byzantine iconoclastic controversy. It was just amazing to be that close to history. At some points, I swear I had to remind myself to close my mouth and breathe. In fact, I was so caught up in the moment that I somehow missed the last Center bus back to our hotel. So, after snapping the last of my pictures of the monastery's iconic exterior, I hailed one of the many cabs waiting nearby and showed them the card we had been given with the address of the hotel. I made it back in time to grab my luggage and get it onto the bus without a problem. I don't think anyone even noticed I had arrived late. I did miss some of the extra downtime we had to swim in the hotel pool, but I think that was a fair tradeoff, on the whole.

A second one I'll never forget was going down one Friday evening to see the Jews welcome in the Sabbath at the Western Wall. It was amazing to watch as the Yeshiva boys came marching down right at sunset, walking in rows linked arm in arm. Everyone, from the Yeshiva students to Israeli soldiers, started different circle dances traditional of the region, just like you see in *The Prince of Egypt* or *Fiddler on the Roof*. Then came the Haredi with their long side curls, tall rounded fur hats, dark suits, and white tassels, bowing and praying toward the Wall. It was my first time visiting the Western Wall, and it was unlike anything I had ever experienced—religious or otherwise. These are two field trips that I will never forget.

However, as memorable as our official field trips were, the unofficial "field trips" that we students could organize on our own by virtue of living in Jerusalem and connecting with the city were even more unforgettable. I will always remember when a group of us decided to join the weekly Friday pilgrimage of the Franciscan friars down the Via

Dolorosa and watched the faithful carrying wooden crosses in remembrance of the Crucifixion. When we reached the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, one of the Franciscans we had befriended, Father Angelo, invited us to stay to watch the evening procession around the Aedicule—the Tomb of Christ. Afterward, Father Angelo gave some of us copies of the prayer service, written in Latin, and then took us in to see the Franciscan Custos's private chapel. We took a picture with Father Angelo in front of the Church, which he subsequently used in a Catholic magazine article on his ministry. A Franciscan and a bunch of BYU Jerusalem Center students, complete with blue bookbags! Whenever I see the image, I can't help but smile and think fondly on the experience and the loving kindness and generosity of Father Angelo.

On another unofficial field trip, some of us were able to arrange a tour of the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Visiting those remarkable sites is something every student hopes to achieve but is difficult because both sites in recent times have been closed to the public. However, while I was in country, my mother did some research and discovered a local part-time tour guide, a Palestinian Christian with connections to the Mufti's office through his work, who would occasionally take his tour groups into the Dome. I reached out to him, and we worked through the entire semester to try to set something up. Despite some setbacks, on our last free day of the semester, ten of us were able to connect with him and tour these holy sites. I could hardly contain my excitement, and I don't think any of the students that were there will ever forget standing beneath the dome at the third holiest site in Islam. It was beautiful and breathtaking—a remarkable opportunity and, I firmly believe, a miraculous answer to a fervent, if not somewhat childish, prayer. Nevertheless, it is also an experience I reflect on with the utmost respect, if not reverence, whenever I think of Islam and its holy sites, and it has helped to endear the faith to me.

Another of my favorite unofficial field-trip experiences was visiting the Orthodox Church of Saint John the Baptist—a small church in the Christian Quarter of the city. It was often closed, but one day, five of us—all boys—happened to walk by when it was open. I immediately told the group we had to pop our heads in, and we had fun seeing the beautiful icons on the walls of the church. We started taking pictures when a gruff old Greek Orthodox priest, Father Theophanes, barked at us, "No pictures!" Dutifully, we put our cameras away. As we continued to poke around, one member of the group went over and started a conversation with Father Theophanes. The rest of us soon joined in the conversation, and we spent the next hour or so talking with him as he explained the

beliefs of the Orthodox faith, why the church was constructed the way it was, and what the icons meant. It was an absolute delight to converse with him about his beliefs.

One of our teachers, an avid photographer, heard about our visit to this church, which he had never been in before. He subsequently stopped by to try to take a look. He too started taking pictures, only to be told off by Father Theophanes. However, unlike us, this teacher pushed back a little. He told the Father, "But you let my students take pictures here the other day." To which Father Theophanes said, "Students? What students?" The professor quickly helped him understand that the five young men with whom he had visited the day before were his students from the Jerusalem Center, to which Father Theophanes exclaimed, "Such good boys! Such good boys!" With Father Theophanes's blessing, the professor then took some pictures of the church, copies of which we later gave to Father Theophanes so he could sell them as post cards to help raise revenue to maintain the building.

This professor also helped us pave the way with the Jerusalem Center administration to take Father Theophanes up on his invitation to return to see the church at night. It was an exciting experience, since we were not allowed to visit the Old City after dark. At the appointed time, our group, which had now grown to about fifteen students and four faculty members, piled into a bus and headed for the Jaffa Gate. From there we walked through the deserted streets to the church. There, Father Theophanes greeted us and showed us his beautiful little church, illuminated by the flickering light of a small strand of eight oil lamps. It was a beautiful sight. One of the faculty suggested that we should sing the hymn "Lead Kindly Light." We asked Father Theophanes if we could, and he said with a wink that although he was not supposed to, he would close the door, and no one would ever know. The song echoed beautifully off the Church's small rotunda.

On our last day in the city, some of us made a point of stopping by the church to say goodbye to Father Theophanes. We exchanged pleasantries and told him we were leaving. In his somewhat broken English, he asked where we were going and what we were going to do when we got home. He then asked when we would be back to Jerusalem. We told him we were not sure, but we hoped to return someday. To which he wished us well and said he hoped that we would be able to return and that he would still be there when we did. I think I walked out of the church with moist eyes, and I will always remember the brief friendship I had with an Orthodox priest and that we had made an impact in his

life. These field trip experiences—both official and unofficial—are what the Jerusalem Center is all about. They are the ones that change you deep down in the soul and that you remember and cherish forever.

Ngatuvai

I'm so glad someone mentioned Egypt, but if I talk about it I'll weep because visiting there meant so much to me. I know many contracted something there that they never want to remember, but my memories of Egypt are full of fascination and awe. Thinking back, it is amazing that I even made it there.

I was speaking with my brother, who also came with me to Jerusalem (which was a choice experience in and of itself), and for us, the most memorable site was the Garden Tomb, and how essential it was for the two of us to visit it each Saturday because we knew we wouldn't get that back. We knew we wouldn't have an opportunity like that again to visit Gethsemane or the Garden Tomb each Sabbath.

Reber

My favorite in-country field trip was to the Galilee. It's just so pristine. I looked at the lay of the land, and I thought of it as being really similar to what Jesus looked at with his own eyes. It's one of the areas in Israel that I don't feel has changed much. I had some very spiritual experiences on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. One I would like to share happened on our reunion trip led by Brent Top and Jeff Chadwick:

I will never forget walking by myself back to the bus after Professor Top had finished teaching us on the shore of Galilee about Peter going back to his old life after the Savior was crucified. The Savior came to him and asked him three times if he loved him, and Peter said, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Then FEED MY SHEEP! How grateful Peter must have been to be able to regain his conviction and show the Lord his dedication after his three denials of Christ in Jerusalem. He was a committed disciple. I had studied Elder Holland's account of this event that he gave in general conference just a couple of months prior to our visit. That preparation, as well as what was taught to me that afternoon, really had me pondering as I walked alone back to the bus. I was so impressed by the Spirit that I stopped in my tracks, and, with tears in my eyes and my body trembling, I looked toward the gate where the buses were parked, and I distinctly had the impression: *Rick, as you walk through that gate and leave here like Peter did, go and feed his sheep!* I thought that the Savior

wouldn't have had any different message for me than he had had for Peter. The Spirit was so strong in such an odd place. There I was on a paved path leaving the beautiful grounds at St. Peter's Primacy. As I neared the bus, I turned and actually walked back and took a photo of the gate and path I was on because it represents one of my "sacred spots" on this earth. I am grateful to have several of those spots, but this was a recent one.

For out-of-country field trips, I will never forget the sunrise on top of Mount Sinai, probably because it's the only sunrise I've ever seen in my life. I'm not really a morning person, but I was pretty proud of myself for waking up and hiking to the top of the mountain in the dark. The testimony meeting midway down the mountain on the way back is also a very powerful memory.

Seely

One of my favorite memories of field trips is also climbing Mount Sinai. When you climb Mount Sinai early, early in the morning with 172 people, you quickly see there are all kinds of people in the group. First, you have a group of tough and energetic guys that are going to be the first ones up, and then you have a group of guys who wait behind to make sure that everybody gets to the top for the sunrise. Once when we got to the top, I noticed a group of students quietly and reverently removing their shoes—because they understood the meaning of the scriptures they were reading about Moses when he met the Lord there.

Another of my favorite memories was the time when my wife, Jo Ann, was hired to be a religion teacher and got to direct her own field-trip bus for the semester. I had the experience of being a bus director's spouse. One of the challenging things about field trips in the Holy Land is visiting the many tels, and after a dozen tels you realize that they may be considered an acquired taste. My wife's students made up a five-verse song about our field trips. I'm only able to sing you one verse. (Sung to the tune of "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains")

Come bus number four to the top of the tel,
Rocks and boulders, oh how swell.
What the tel, what the tel,
What the tel are we climbing?
Rocks and boulders, oh how swell.
Climb another hill, oh what the tel.



Seely

Connected with our experiences at the Center, we're part of a truly rigorous academic experience. We study scripture. We study the Palestinian narrative. We study the Jewish narrative. We have a hardcore course on ancient Near Eastern history and culture that goes from 4,000 BC almost to modern times. We thought it would be fun for you to share your favorite teaching moments.

Cobb

All my most spiritual experiences as a student in the Holy Land happened with my Old and New Testament classes. The experience I recall the most vividly happened away from our traditional class meetings. We met at Professor Top's home in Jerusalem one night for a closing party with our Old Testament class. After celebrating our semester together, Professor Top and his wife, Wendy, sat us down in the living room and told us about death, as they had just completed a book on the subject. As a twenty-year-old, my first thought was that the subject didn't apply much to me. Then not long into the discussion, I realized that this was actually not only enlightening but a pivotal discussion for me. Citing scripture, they put our minds at ease about the death experience and opened my mind and heart with a deeper understanding of what each human will experience. Since that evening, I have always felt like I have a better understanding of the spirit world and of my Heavenly Father's love for me. I am not sure that I could have endured as well the premature deaths of both my mother and my brother had I not had this profound learning moment in an unusual setting prior to losing them. I am grateful that there are opportunities in the program where we can get to know and learn from both the students and the teachers in uncommon ways and in uncommon settings.

Elcock

My favorite teaching moments didn't always happen in the classroom *per se*. Sadly, the Egypt portion of our semester was canceled, and we had two weeks that opened up due to this change in plans. In lieu of Egypt, for one week we participated in an archaeological dig at Tel Ekron with Professor Jeff Chadwick and Professor Ann E. Killebrew as leaders. We worked hard on that dig. We scrubbed sherds, we labeled them, we swept the dirt in 110-degree weather for a solid week. It was a great and unusual experience as we learned a lot about biblical archeology.

The other week was spent working in the banana fields in the north at Afikim, an Israeli kibbutz near the Sea of Galilee. We would take a truck ride early in the morning to the banana fields. Using Ginzu-type knives, we trimmed back the banana tree fronds. We discovered banana leaves can be quite sharp like knives. The labor started in the early morning and went until about four or five in the afternoon. It was good, hard work, and I think it was really valuable and humbling for us to work like that. We ate lunch in the communal dining hall and spent dinners with the kibbutz families. It was unlike anywhere I've ever spent my time: to be on a kibbutz working all day and participating with the families at night. It was fascinating to watch as bikes, tools, homes, and even child-care were communal and actually shared on the kibbutz.

Gilbert

I remember going to Dan with Professor Roy Huff. At Dan, idol worship dominated the culture, and it was near here (at Caesarea Philippi, a pagan site) that the Savior taught Peter he would be the rock upon which the Savior would build the church. Reading the scriptures on site, seeing what Peter would have seen, and knowing how powerful the Savior's teaching to Peter would have been, given the physical presence of what was before him, were so significant to me. Caesarea Philippi sits on a huge rock. And it was meaningful to realize just how well the Savior literally taught using the things around him. So many of my favorite teaching moments came from being on-site and having that kind of experience. The Savior taught about a coin falling in the crack, which may not mean much to us, but being in a home where this could have happened and seeing why losing a coin this way was significant to the people of that time changed the story and added depth and meaning. So, in Dan and Caesarea facing this mountainous rock, I was struck that Peter must have felt both the weight of responsibility and the peace of the Savior guiding and teaching him. Peter would have realized, both symbolically and literally, the importance of little "r" rock and big "R" Rock, the Savior being the big "R," and Peter, as the Apostle, being the little "r." As I learned about Peter and the specific responsibility he was given, I felt impressed that we all have a specific role, and that the Savior is our guide to find what that is and to accomplish all that he asks of us. I am so grateful for those little and big moments where the scriptures came alive in a way that I hadn't experienced with the Bible before.

Meldrum

There were numerous experiences both in class and out of class that were phenomenal. All our BYU faculty were amazing, and it was a privilege to learn from them and share their excitement about geography, history, and the scriptures, especially on sites. I enjoyed learning from our local faculty and hearing their unique perspectives on Jewish and Islamic history as well as the conflict in the Holy Land. However, one of the “teaching moments” that stands out the most was with Kent Brown, who was the Center’s director when I was there. Professor Brown was working on his commentary on the Gospel of Luke for the BYU New Testament Commentary Series. Every Saturday, he would do a fireside on the Gospel of Luke as a means of working through his thoughts and sharing his insights with us. It was always a packed classroom, and we would take an hour to get through about six verses. At the end, you wanted it to go on for another five hours. I think it was that experience where I really learned how to see what Luke was saying and to feast on the scriptures. It was just paradigm shifting and something I have tried to apply in my own life and gospel study ever since.

I also remember fondly being on the other end of the spectrum when we made our field trip to the Galilee. One of our excursions was to take a boat from the resort where we were staying to the other side of the lake. The tradition was to ask the boat driver to stop in the middle of the sea, where a student was asked to share a brief spiritual thought on the Savior’s miracles on the water. For our group, I was asked to deliver the thought. I remember preparing and delving into the narratives, trying to really understand what the Gospel authors were trying to say. Then, when the day came and the boat stopped, I stood up and delivered my thought. I don’t recall anything in particular that I said on the occasion. However, I always remember feeling a deep sense of humility as I realized that for that brief moment, I was literally doing what Jesus had done—teaching in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. In a country where so many of the religious sites are disputed by the various sects, it was the closest I could probably come to saying I had actually stood where Jesus had stood. The experience makes the phrase “trying to be like Jesus” resonate with a whole new meaning and reality and is a reminder to me of what it means to be a disciple of Christ and to continue to figuratively do as he did.

Ngatuwai

I think I've just been fortunate to have Jerusalem as a shared experience with my brother, and then I married someone who also went winter semester of 2013. We have been able to have some amazing conversations since. While this isn't my memory, this is something that has made an impression on me from my husband's journal. I won't say it exactly right, but his group was in a devotional where they simulated what the Upper Room would have been like when Christ established the sacrament. President Uchtdorf, who was visiting Jerusalem with his family, shared some impromptu sacred thoughts with the students about his relationship with the Savior and the power of the sacrament. I thought, what an amazing teaching moment that had to have been, and it has really affected my husband's testimony and our family. I was blessed with Professors Huff, Skinner, and Brown, and many other great teachers. I just think it is a concentrated and consecrated time of learning. There are so many moments; I really couldn't pick one, but that's one that stood out to me and stays with my family.

Reber

A favorite teaching moment for me happened in Shepherds' Field. It was late in fall semester. I think we were getting into December and it was early in the evening. The wind was blowing enough to be noticed, and purple clouds were rolling in over the horizon. The lights were coming on from the top of the hill in Bethlehem. Professor Top read from Luke 2, and we reenacted the Christmas story. The scripture says, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13-14). Professor Top stopped, and he looked at us and said, "I'd like you to consider that this might not be your first time in Shepherds' Field. We may have been a part of that heavenly host. We probably didn't have anything better going on that night." That was so powerful when he said that to us, and the spirit was so strong. It's something I've never forgotten, and every Christmas I think and share thoughts from my experience in Shepherds' Field.

As we left that night, it was getting cold and dark. There was a Bedouin mother with a lot of little kids watching our group board the bus. I watched a classmate of mine, who has a heart as big as anyone I know, quietly sneak away, take off her soft, cozy, yellow sweatshirt, give it to this mother, and then hop back on the bus. To me, it was just such a

fitting end to such a spiritual evening. My friend taught me in a quiet way the true meaning of Christmas. I could only smile as we drove away and I looked back to see this mother already wearing this bright yellow sweatshirt that stood out in the grey and white evening shadows. That was a good moment.



Seely

We go to Jerusalem not as tourists but as pilgrims. A wise man said about pilgrimage: “Tourists pass through places, but pilgrims let places pass through them, allowing their hearts to be changed.”¹ And a twentieth-century Welsh poet, R. S. Thomas, expressed the central purpose of pilgrimage: “The point of travelling is not to arrive but to return home laden with pollen you shall work up into honey the mind feeds on.”²

Please tell us about the impact that the Jerusalem Center experience has had on your life, small or great.

Cobb

I think that the great irony of the experience at the Jerusalem Center is that you know you’re doing something special when you’re there, but you don’t realize just how special it is and what kind of an impact it will have on your life. I think it had a great impact on my life back then, but I feel like it just continues to impact my life over and over again. When we went on our reunion trip, we were at the Garden of Gethsemane on our final day, which was the Sabbath. I had the most extraordinary thing happen to me as Professor Top was speaking: I received an answer to a prayer that I had made to my Heavenly Father twenty-five years before in room 306 in the Jerusalem Center. As I looked out over the Garden of Gethsemane, through the Kidron Valley, I sincerely wanted an answer, and I didn’t really feel like my answer was completely satisfactory. But that morning last August, I felt so much that my Heavenly Father loves me. He is aware of me now, and he was aware of me twenty-five years ago. It just echoed the emotions and the circumstances through my

1. Peter J. Miano, “Pilgrimage or Tourism,” *The Society for Biblical Studies*, September 30, 2009, accessed October 2, 2020, http://www.sbsedu.org/L3_e_newsletter30.9.09/PilgrimageTourismB.htm.

2. R. S. Thomas, *Collected Poems 1945–1990* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1995), 293.

life where I had felt like prayers were answered. The things that I had experienced in the Jerusalem Center brought opportunities to my life and taught me important lessons. I feel incredibly impacted by it, and I feel that every day. I can't seem to let go of the experience I had twenty-five years ago because it made such a huge impact on my life. I met my husband in the Oasis, so there's that too. Meeting my husband on the program was the best and most impactful part.

Elcock

I've been blessed by the Holy Land twice, once as a twenty-year-old girl and again just a few months ago. I think the experiences from a few months ago were maybe even more impactful for me because I appreciated them more. When we were first married, I begged my husband for us to go back as a married couple because I longed to share the Jerusalem experience with him. It just wasn't in the cards for us. Try as I might, the timing just wasn't right. However, Heavenly Father knew the desire of my heart. Fast forward twenty-five years, and we heard about a trip with our original instructors, Brent Top and Jeff Chadwick, leading the tour. I knew that this tour could not be duplicated, and so we pulled the trigger, and I'm so glad that we did. Going back to the upper auditorium at the Jerusalem Center and seeing the Old City again was like Christmas for me, especially to be there with my husband. Our culminating site activity with the group was at the Garden Tomb. We sat and shared scripture and sang hymns and my eyes could not stop leaking. I was full to the brim with the Spirit and gratitude to my Heavenly Father for this incredible experience. I knew in that moment that my Heavenly Father had answered a long-held prayer and fulfilled the desire of my heart to go back to the Holy Land with my husband. It was such a sweet experience that I will never forget. When you are part of a group of like-minded people studying the Old and New Testaments, walking where the Savior walked and examining the cultures and the deep-seated conflict in Jerusalem, it tends to draw people together. Jerusalem knits hearts together. I felt like Heavenly Father's hand was in so many of the small and large details of our trip and my original Jerusalem Center experience. I am knit and bound to a number of people because of Jerusalem. These experiences have molded me. They have changed me as an individual forever. They have changed how I view the world. I have a greater capacity to love others and observe people that are different from me in a new way. Most importantly, these experiences in

Israel have increased my testimony of my Savior Jesus Christ. For that I am eternally grateful.

Gilbert

I remember going to Gethsemane or the Garden Tomb each Sabbath and seeing many other Christians from different churches and different countries. We often sang while we were there and always tried to include more common Christian songs like “How Great Thou Art” or “Be Still My Soul.” I was amazed and humbled each time those from around the world joined us in their language with their own ways of praising our God, some very different from our own. I felt such a connection with these people. I gained a great respect for the millions of good people out there who worship the best way they know how. I saw this demonstration of faith repeatedly as we walked through the Holy Land, and it had a significant impact on me both spiritually and culturally and has continued to shape my interactions around the world. As a result, a yearning to experience more of this world and its people awoke within me. Now, when I travel to other countries, I can’t just be a tourist. Sometimes I even miss popular tourist locations altogether, and I’m okay with that, because I have a richer experience when I interact more with the people. Learning from and being taught by other cultures and religions is edifying and inspiring in ways that we don’t get when we just focus on what we know around us—I am a better person because of it.

My experience at the Center has shaped me in so many ways, but the spiritual experiences and connection I felt with the Savior are what I treasure above all else. I remember sitting on my balcony one day at the Center and feeling incredibly alone. In that moment I was feeling that, even though I was surrounded by a large group of really great people, no one *really* knew me. I think we all have moments like this when we need to know heaven is aware and knows who we are. As I looked out at the Old City, a thought crossed my mind and a feeling of peace filled my whole soul as I realized that the Savior too had experienced such a feeling. He too had walked the streets of Jerusalem, surrounded by hundreds, even thousands of people at times, yet he had also felt loneliness, had felt that no one truly comprehended him or the work he was here to do. I was struck by the connection I felt with my Savior and Elder Brother in that moment. I knew then and still know that he knows me and what I’m feeling. I can still feel what I felt that day on my balcony, and my testimony of this great truth has continued to grow since. He knows us. He is real. His

life was and is real. And the entire purpose of it all is to bless, to heal, to comfort, and to redeem us. There is no better study abroad than the one that connects us more profoundly with our Savior and teaches us in such a real way of his incredible life.

Meldrum

I can directly say that my current interest in early Christianity and love of the New Testament has come from my time in Jerusalem and the opportunity I had to see the sites and learn about the scriptures and Christian history from the amazing faculty I had. I think I can trace my interest in doing interfaith work directly back to the opportunity I had to interact with the multiple faith communities in Israel, some of which we in the Church and in the West never hear of. More fundamentally, I think the opportunity to study the scriptures with some amazing faculty and students and to see the sites where these great experiences of faith happened really helps one gain a perspective on how to answer that great riddle of reconciling Jerusalem and Athens—faith and reason—and on how to become a disciple scholar. In addition, ultimately, I think partaking of the spirit of the place—the Center itself, the faculty, the students, the sites both Christian and non-Christian—and seeing the acts of pure devotion and faith of people up at the Dome of the Rock or in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher or at the Garden Tomb or at the Western Wall inspires one to want to be a better disciple and to want to exercise greater faith in Christ and our Heavenly Father. Like all pilgrims, I think I can firmly say that I have come back from Jerusalem changed for the better in every aspect of my life. It's an experience for which I am increasingly grateful, that I will never forget, that I will always cherish, and that I hope will continue to be a guiding light in my life.

Ngatuvai

We had our ten-year reunion a couple of weeks ago, and something one of my friends shared has stayed with me. She said, "I just don't feel like I appreciated it like I do now. It's like this jewel of an experience that I just pull out and I look at. Now I see all the facets and how brilliant it was." This program is so transformative; in order to have an experience that transcends boundaries of faith and to feel actual peace in Jerusalem, I think this Center is set apart where you feel so safe from the storm and you get to see things how perhaps the Lord would see them. It continues to be a choice experience for learning and enlightenment

all throughout my life. I think, similar to a mission, it is a place you are set apart to connect with the Savior. It is sacred ground, as we heard from Elder Holland earlier this afternoon. It's amazing to even know that we got to touch that. One other thing I want to share is that when I returned from Jerusalem ten years ago everybody kept asking, "Tell us about Jerusalem. You walked where the Savior walked." I would tell them that while that is magnificent, I also learned while being there that you don't have to go there to know that Jesus is real; you can surround yourself with believers and be a believer yourself. That's been a very humbling and unforgettable realization I've held tightly to, to know that he is real. That can happen anywhere, but to have a time and a place set aside where you can really dive in, that is something that will never leave. Jerusalem was the first thing that bonded my husband and me while dating and has made such an impact on our family and the way we communicate our testimonies and lead our lives. So, thanks to all of you who have made the BYU Jerusalem program and center so great.

Reber

I've always considered my experience at the Jerusalem Center one of the biggest foundation stones in my testimony, next to my mission in Alabama. Being here today has really made me appreciate, even more, the spirit of this building. When Elder Holland said earlier today that we don't know the full capacity of what the Center has to offer or what its history really will hold, that really resonates with me. I think we all have a deep love for the Center, for the spirit of the Center, for the teachings, and for the way the scriptures have come to life. In my eyes as I read, I picture the lay of the land, the sights, the smells, the sounds. I always seem to be walking in Israel somewhere as I study. I would like to just really say thank you to all of you in this room who have fought to make the Center what it is. I am a total byproduct of that building and the Jerusalem Center study abroad program. Twenty-six years ago, literally, I was sitting there. Julie and April mentioned that some of us got the chance to go back on a twenty-five-year reunion tour. I met my wife at the Center twenty-six years ago. We never would have thought, walking back through the doors of the Center all these years later, that we would experience the emotion that we felt flooding over us. We were absolutely blown away. It was so surreal; it seemed like we were just there and we had never left. The Center looks, feels, and smells as brand new as it did twenty-six years ago. They've kept that place immaculate. I turned left while everybody else went right to go down to the upper auditorium for

our tour. I just bawled because I was so thankful for my Jerusalem Center experience then and to be back again. I want to keep the Holy Land with me forever. I won't say I'm not going to go back, because I very well might. I'm thankful, and I want to thank everybody in this room who made and continues to make the Jerusalem Center what it is today.

Seely

I remember walking on a field trip with my little boy. He was holding my hand and looking at the group of students in front of us, and he said to me, "Dad, just think, those are *our* students." I want you to know that our children have always been fiercely proud of you as "our students." I sent all our children an email a couple of weeks ago and asked, "What are your favorite memories of the students at the Center?" When you go as a family, there are lots of memories of the experience in the Holy Land, but this question was just about the experience with students. I got ten pages. Here are a couple of things that we all remember. We loved watching the students do service: painting a rainbow on the wall at the Princess Basma School, assembling humanitarian aid kits in the garage, feeding the newborn babies at the Princess Basma School, Palestinian night at the Center. We love hearing our students sing: at sacrament meeting in the Center, in Hezekiah's tunnel, in the banana fields at the kibbutz, in Saint Anne's, in the Bell Caves, at Shepherds' Field, in the boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, in the concerts, on Palm Sunday going over to the Mount of Olives, and singing "Oh, Happy Day" at the Garden Tomb on Easter morning to a rock band. Let me tell you, you haven't lived until you've done that.

At the end of our experience with the Jerusalem Center, we learned something sobering: our experience at the Jerusalem Center was not an adventure just in space, but it was an adventure in time. And while we can return to visit Jerusalem, and we can return to visit the Jerusalem Center, we can never go back to this time together in this special place. The time we were there remains as an oasis in our lives, an oasis of fond memories, of happy times, of being together, and of feeling the Spirit. And when we come home through the years we say, "Who can forget Jerusalem? Who can ever forget our time at the Jerusalem Center?"

The Jerusalem Center at Thirty

James R. Kearl

A First Presidency Project

I first “met” James E. Faust in June 1989, when, a month after the Jerusalem Center was dedicated, he called my home. BYU president Jeffrey R. Holland had appointed me an associate academic vice president in late February, with a portfolio that included the university’s international and undergraduate programs, but this assignment was set aside when he was called to the Seventy in April and Rex Lee was named president of BYU. In June, Rex invited me to stay on in that same role with the portfolio President Holland had given me, which on the international side included administrative oversight of the university’s new Jerusalem Center.

Elder Faust introduced himself, asked me a bit about myself, and then asked when I planned to go to Jerusalem. “Probably at Christmas,” I responded. He replied, “Well, if I had administrative oversight for a First Presidency project, I think I would want to see it as soon as I could.” I can take a hint: I was on a plane for Jerusalem in early August 1989 for the first of more than ninety trips in the next thirty years. I returned to Provo, started teaching and learning about my administrative assignments. A couple of weeks after I returned from Jerusalem, I got another call from Elder Faust. He asked about my trip and, within a minute or so, it became very clear that I had been sent but had not returned and reported, and that this was a mistake. Having gently delivered that message, he invited me to join him in the office of Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, later that week. So



The library at the Jerusalem Center. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

began wonderful relationships with, to a lesser degree, President Hunter and, to a much greater degree, Elder Faust that lasted until each passed away—relationships that have extended, in a sense, beyond their deaths with Elder Holland’s gentle reminders on occasion of their keen interest in the Center and his thoughtful counsel and concern for its success.

At the conclusion of this first meeting with President Hunter and Elder Faust in early September 1989, Elder Faust walked me to the door of President Hunter’s office and, facing me, with a gesture something like thumping on someone’s chest, said, “Remember, Jim, this is a First Presidency project.” For the next five or six years, he repeated this *literally* every time I met with him, which was every three or four months. At the end of our meetings, he would walk around his desk, accompany me to the door, turn to me (often with the thumping-on-the-chest gesture), and say, “Remember, Jim, this is a First Presidency project.” After five years or so, it became a bit more intermittent, but to the end of his life he would on occasion figuratively and sometimes literally (in good humor) gently thump on my chest while saying, “Remember, Jim, this is a First Presidency project.” This is a lesson I’m unlikely to forget but one that was dramatically emphasized when I accompanied Elder Faust to Jerusalem in 1994. While walking arm-in-arm with him toward

the Center from the traffic circle outside the front gate to the Center's grounds, he looked at the exterior wall where "The Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, Brigham Young University" appears in large blue letters and said, sotto voce, "It's sad and it's wrong," referring, clearly, to the fact that the Church's name did not appear at the entrance to the Center's grounds or anywhere in the building itself for that matter.

For President Hunter and Elder Faust, the construction of the Center may have been an assignment from the First Presidency, but it was also a labor of love and devotion. Their view of the Center as a First Presidency project didn't originate with them. President Harold B. Lee, in his 1972 visit to the Holy Land, had indicated he hoped a building could be constructed that would be a Church presence in Jerusalem and that would also house BYU's study abroad programs. In 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball, during a visit to Jerusalem on the occasion of the dedication of the Orson Hyde Memorial Garden, expressed the same priorities—the construction of a building to be a Church presence in Jerusalem but to also house BYU's study abroad programs.

Given BYU's day-to-day use of the Center for its study abroad programs, it's easy for almost everyone to think only about BYU's presence. But I know full well that the Center is not BYU's building—we are merely custodians for the First Presidency. I expect to meet President Faust again one day; I'm confident he will ask that I account for my stewardship of "the First Presidency's project." So, while the university had to step forward and the Church had to step back in order to preserve the Center's ownership in the difficult days described in this morning's first session, I have tried to find ways to honor the First Presidency's keen interest in having a Church presence in Jerusalem. While this necessarily means that the Center has to represent the Church mostly through its BYU student programs, I have also looked for other ways for the Center to have a broader, if indirect, Church presence. I hasten to say, however, that opportunities to do so have come mostly by luck, not planning, and, in truth, my efforts have been modest at best.

As one example, we now have a Sunday evening concert series with forty-four concerts a year in four eleven-week programs, with concerts featuring jazz, ethnic, and lighter music eight times a year on Thursday evenings. We have loyal patrons who fill the auditorium for each concert and many who come on standby hoping to get a ticket. We also have a waiting list of terrific musicians who would like to perform at the Center. It's widely recognized among Israelis as one of the best concert series (and concert venues) in the Holy Land.

It's not that there was some grand plan to do this, however. Rather, the concerts came about in the following way. As background, you need to know that in addition to the nonproselytizing agreements, the land lease established a government "public activities" oversight committee. For the first ten years of the lease, we were not permitted to invite outsiders into the building without the approval of this committee.

Back to the story: In the two years between when the students first moved into the building and when I came to have administrative oversight, a student choir had begun to sing for our workers and faculty and their families one evening during the Christmas season. The word got out, and a number of friends in the city wanted to attend the student choral evening. In November 1989, George Horton and I met with the public activities committee (which President Hunter always referred to as the "muzzle-the-Mormons committee") to seek permission to invite these outside guests to the concert. George shared the program, which, no surprise, was all Christmas music. The chair of the committee, Haim Klugman (the director general of the Ministry of Justice), said, "You can invite a few guests, but you cannot sing Christian-oriented Christmas songs." I was annoyed. A few days later, Mr. Klugman called George and asked for syllabi and other curricular materials because "the committee would like to review the Center's curriculum." I was really annoyed and determined to push back against the committee's clear overreach.

Upon my return to the States I met with President Hunter and Elder Faust, and we agreed that we needed to establish the principle that this was our building, that what we did within the building was our business and not subject to oversight by anyone. The committee could, if it wished, forbid us to invite outside guests, but that was the extent of its powers. So we might sing or perform to an empty hall, but we would sing and perform what we wanted. And, of course, our curriculum was, emphatically, none of the government's business. To establish these principles, I proposed to the two of them and Rex that we send performers from BYU's music department for a concert once each quarter, which would mean that the committee would have to meet with us four times a year and be forced to decide whether we could invite outside guests.

Our first concert was in April 1990 by Rick Elliot. Our second, by the Drinkall-Baker Duo, was in June 1990. On both occasions, the committee somewhat reluctantly agreed that we could invite guests. Then something very strange happened. The immigration of Russians to Israel reached its peak about this time, and there were talented Russian musicians playing on street corners for spare change. Mr. Klugman,



Mosaic above a stairwell in the Jerusalem Center. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

who six months earlier had resisted our desire to share Christmas music with invited friends and neighbors and who had begrudgingly approved limited outside attendance at the two concerts we held, called and said, essentially, “The public activities oversight committee doesn’t understand why you’re so closed to visitors—we urge you to open up your concerts to local musicians and audiences and make the Center more accessible.” From that flowed the now well-known and well-regarded Center concert series wherein, even in the darkest days of the Second Intifada when no Israeli would put a foot in East Jerusalem, we had full houses of mostly Israelis sitting in an auditorium in East Jerusalem.

Despite this eventual success, the concerts were not an immediate success. Even with a surplus of talented Russian emigrés, we struggled to consistently attract the best musicians. So, to understate it, our concerts were of uneven quality. In 1995, we hired a remarkable woman, Neomi Weinstein, to help with hosting. In 2001, again by luck and no great foresight, we asked her to take up the challenge of creating a first-rate concert series. She succeeded beyond anyone’s expectations, and we now feature the finest musicians in the Holy Land in one of the best-known music performance series in Jerusalem.

About ten years ago, we looked for ways to entertain the audience while they were waiting for concerts to begin (especially those with

standby tickets who might be sent away if all of the actual ticket holders showed up) and asked Neomi to start curating art exhibits in a lovely public space down the hall from the auditorium (called then, and now, the LRC). We now feature both Palestinian and Israeli visual artists in six-month rotating exhibits. As Eran notes in his presentation, this led to the Center becoming, in a sense, part of the broader art community in Jerusalem when a couple of years ago we were asked to be the principal host for a citywide contemporary visual arts festival.

At about the same time that the concerts took root, because of the controversy over its construction, its prominent site in East Jerusalem, and several architectural awards it had won, we had people knocking on the door and asking if they could tour the building. While we hadn't planned on a tour program, we took advantage of this interest in visiting the building and quickly moved to a tour format that has lasted to the present. We show a short video that connects the Center to BYU and to its sponsoring church; provide a short recital that showcases the tonal range and color of the Center's organ; provide a tour of the public spaces of the building; share the spectacular view of the Old City from the plaza outside of the seventh level, where there are four models of Jerusalem at various points in its history; then end with a stroll through the Center's gardens, which feature ancient olive presses, an olive crushing apparatus that dates from around the time of Christ, and a water feature, essentially a small creek that runs alongside the pathway that returns our visitors to the street exit from the Center's grounds.

Along the tour route, there are mosaics on permanent loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority. They are mounted in the building because the Antiquities Authority, which warehouses hundreds of mosaics from buildings around the Holy Land, decided that it wanted some of them displayed in "important public buildings" around the city. They approached us, asking whether we'd be interested in joining a handful of sites they had selected, including the new airport terminal and Supreme Court building, where they would mount mosaics. We agreed.

Here is another example of a fortuitous opportunity to boost the Church's presence: In preparation for the year 2000, which Jerusalem decided to celebrate as its three thousandth "birthday," Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek approached the First Presidency about joining a city-wide project to light the façades of the most important buildings in the city. In East Jerusalem, the structures selected were the Church of All Nations, the Center, and the towers at Augusta Victoria and the Church of the Ascension. Between 1987 and 2000, the only lights at the Center



Mosaics along a stairway. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

visible from the Old City at night were interior lights that happened to be turned on in various rooms. But now, as a result of the work of a French specialist in exterior architectural lighting, the Center's façade and gardens are a literal light upon a hill—a visible presence, one that in the evenings connects the Center to the fabric of Jerusalem.

We have also opened the Center to select community groups for conferences and workshops, as detailed by Eran. In addition to these, the Center has also hosted events where the Church was more directly involved, including a celebration of the 175th anniversary of Orson Hyde's visit to the Holy Land with representatives of American Jewish communities, a couple of visits to the Holy Land by the governor of Utah, and a recent conference of American Jewish and Latter-day Saint scholars. In addition, during the December holiday season, we add Christmas lights to the Center's façade and, on the main plaza that overlooks the Old City, a very large lighted artificial tree that can be seen from across the city. The lights are turned on at an event to which we invite neighbors and friends. Lastly, we've provided logistical support for the last two Papal visits to the Holy Land, including providing a place to stay for some of the members in the Pope's entourage (that is, cardinals). The Pope himself stays next door at the Papal Nuncio residence.

Now a final example. Beginning in the mid-1990s, we partnered with LDS Charities to support humanitarian work in the Holy Land. We continue that partnership today, but in addition to the funding LDS Charities provides for major projects (which have included neonatal resuscitation training and the donation of medicines, medical and dental equipment, and wheelchairs, among other things), the Center spends close to half a million dollars each year from earnings on its own endowment on projects that involve students in assembling and distributing school and hygiene kits and on small grants to local NGOs in support of families, kids, and education. Some of our other activities in these areas are highlighted by Eran.

I think President Hunter and President Faust as well as, I hope, President Lee and President Kimball would agree that there is a Church presence in Jerusalem, albeit not quite what any of them may have expected.

The Building

Even though the Center was dedicated in May 1989, there were fairly large unfinished spaces scattered about the building, and construction wasn't actually completed until 1994. The Center, as lovely as it was and is, wasn't designed particularly well for academic programs and students. There were too few offices for faculty, too little study space for students (the library, for example, accommodates only thirty-two students), no room except for a small gym for student activities and nonacademic student gatherings, no space for exercise equipment, and so forth.

Some, but not all, of these challenges were remedied by completing the unfinished spaces. Between 1989 and 1994, we completed the Domed Theater; a large reception and multipurpose area called, for curious historical reasons, the LRC; and a four-office suite in what was an unfinished space to the east of the library. All are on the eighth level. We roughed out a student commons in a large unfinished area in the middle of the building (which was expanded and nicely finished in 2003) and added an exercise equipment room in what was an unfinished space to the north of the gym, both on the sixth level. We added three dorm rooms that could house up to eleven additional students in unfinished space on the first level. Eli Rahat, the construction engineer who built the Center, and I also figured out that there was sufficient room between the hallway along the north wall of the west wing of the fifth level and the hillside under the building to its north to permit expanding this part of the fifth level, thereby modestly enlarging the Center by building toward the hillside. In this additional space, we

added four rooms that we use for offices, game and computer rooms for faculty's children, and a second laundry for families living in the building and for our in-residence visitors.

When the Center's student programs were suspended in 2001, we began renovating and refurbishing the interiors and exterior, starting with the student rooms. Between 2001 and 2006, we also completed major projects to enhance safety and security, including, for example, installing a building-wide fire suppression system, smoke detectors, and additional interior and exterior cameras. We started substantial renovations of the administrative offices on level 7 and the gymnasium on level 6 in September 2020. Renovations of the student commons on level 6 will begin in January 2021. When these projects are completed, we will have completely renovated, over the last fifteen years, the interior of the building and the Center's gardens. We have also replaced nearly all of the Center's technical infrastructure (air-conditioning, hot water system, piping, communications wiring, and security systems). All of the restrooms, public as well as those in housing area, and all of the apartment kitchens have been redesigned and renovated. Because current faculty families are younger and larger, a couple of years ago we replaced the three student apartments on the first level with a single, large faculty apartment, added an outside playground for kids, and made some interior changes connecting faculty apartments on the fifth level so that we can reconfigure four original apartments into two, three, or four apartments depending upon the size of faculty families. By the end of spring 2020, we will have converted eight student apartments on the fifth level to rooms more suitable for the many Church and university guests who stay at the Center.

The interior changes are most easily seen in the kitchen and serving areas, which were completely redesigned to meet modern health code requirements when we reopened in 2007. Changes are also obvious in the ceilings throughout public spaces and the fifth-floor housing area, where almost all of the original white egg-crate aluminum ceilings in the hallways and LRC have been replaced with handsome, warm, wood-lattice ceilings. We replaced the fountain at the center of the building, which now provides the soothing sounds of gently trickling water that reaches to all of the open areas of the building. We have also created five student study areas scattered about the sixth level and a very nice student commons with a student-run snack bar and computer lab. We recently converted one classroom into a second exercise room with larger cardio exercise equipment (treadmills, stair steppers, and elliptical trainers). Except for more mature landscaping and a redesign of the



New workout space. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

gardens to the west of the building, which now include a lovely creek with running water from top to bottom, there are no obvious changes to the exterior. However, all of the white fencing (of which there's nearly a mile stretched along the gardens from level 7 to level 2) is new, supposedly lower maintenance. We've also replaced most of the exterior teak wood with aluminum, including sleek new patio pergolas for each room that hang from the building rather than being supported by posts on the patios themselves. The teak exterior of the glass wall in the eighth-floor gallery and, with the completion of the project in April 2020, all of the exterior teak lattices that have provided dappled shade to the Center's south-facing glass façade have also been replaced with aluminum, extruded in profiles and coloring that look like the original teak. In everything, we've tried to honor the vision of the original architects, although we've not replaced like with like. The building looks fresh—you would never guess that it's over thirty years old—but it also looks a bit different in some areas than it originally did.

Personnel

As I understand the matter, the original plan was that in addition to the local staff, the Center would have some permanent expatriate and some rotating expat faculty and administrators. Since 1989, we have moved entirely to one- or two-year rotating expats and have repatriated the full-time positions set aside for the permanent expats to the Jerusalem Center's Provo Office. Because the university doesn't need many full-time employees devoted to Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) history, but



The student-run Shekel Shack. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

the Center does, most of these repatriated FTEs have been used to hire additional ANE history faculty. What has evolved is a system whereby a host BYU department gets the use of a Center faculty member when he or she is on campus, but individuals in these faculty slots must teach at the Center for either one or two years every fourth or fifth year.

The original plan was also to have several specialized programs, including intensive Arabic and Hebrew programs. Dil Parkinson, professor of Asian and Near Eastern languages who handled the immersive Arabic language programs, and I agreed some time ago that it made better sense to have immersive Arabic programs in either Egypt or Jordan. So that program, which is still supported by Jerusalem Center FTE, is now in Amman, Jordan, each fall, with a two-week program of study in the Holy Land each December. Despite repeated tries, the Hebrew program has never really gotten off the ground, although there is a proposal now in the works for another try. For many years, we hosted a nursing program from Ricks/BYU–I each fall. Regrettably, changing supervision requirements and insurance costs put an end to that program. But we now support a small number of BYU students in field archaeology programs each May and June.

The original plan was to use two service couples in administrative support positions (such as accountants, office managers, and secretaries). We have since expanded to four service couples, none of whom is in an admin support position, where we've hired locals instead. So, consistent with the "Church presence" described earlier, one couple handles the

hosting of visitors and humanitarian outreach; a second couple works with the music and art programs (including providing the short organ recitals for each visiting group described earlier); a third couple provides support for the Jerusalem District and its branches; and a fourth couple is involved in student support and provides medical assistance, manages the Center's housing, and helps manage the Center's cafeteria.

The original plan was to contract with the MOR company for local workers. This created tax problems, and in 1989 all of our local workers became Center employees, and we contracted with the MOR company for, essentially, HR services (hiring, training, firing) and management of the Center's maintenance. Eli Rahat, who, in addition to building the Center, was also the founder of MOR, had one onsite MOR manager. MOR developed other clients, and Eli started rotating onsite managers between MOR clients every couple of years. The third MOR employee rotated into this building-management position at the Center was a young Israeli, Eran Hayet. Eran was unusually able along lots of dimensions, and when it came time for Eli to rotate a new person in and rotate Eran out to another MOR-managed facility, I said "no," and Eran remained at the Center. With regard to the Center, this is the most consequential decision I've made in the past thirty years. Later, when we pulled the expat admin team out in the middle of the Second Intifada, I persuaded the First Presidency and BYU to turn to Eran to manage the Center, and he became a Center/BYU employee. As I describe below, in 2006 when we reestablished the student program, I proposed to the First Presidency and BYU that we turn to permanent local administrators in lieu of rotating expat administrators. (From 1989 to 2002, we had four expat administrators in residence—a director, an associate director, an assistant to the director for the field trip program, and an assistant to the director for finances.) They agreed, and Eran became the Center's executive director, with Tawfic Alawi, a Palestinian, as one associate director and an expat BYU employee as a second associate director. This started as an experiment. President Faust told me that while the First Presidency agreed to let me move forward with what I had proposed, if it failed, I had to unwind the arrangement—that is, I would have to fire Eran. But it succeeded. So well, in fact, that were BYU, Elder Holland, or the First Presidency to decide to reduce the FTEs devoted to administering the Center, I am certain that Jim Kearl would be out of a job and Eran Hayet wouldn't.

The importance of this change for the Center, our programs, and the Church's presence really cannot be overestimated. First, financial support of expats is very costly. Second, with rotating expat administrators,

there's no "within the Center" institutional memory, and as a consequence, there was a steep learning curve every two years with the rotation of expat administrators. Third, local contacts and knowledge are essential in the current security environment. In short, the current administrative arrangement allows us to reduce the demand on Church financial resources, preserve institutional memory (which has been extraordinarily important in the long-term management of the Center), and substantially enhance security for our students. Having Eran as the executive director has also substantially reduced the costs of renovating and refurbishing the Center. (I really have no idea how I could have contracted for and managed the dozens and dozens of refurbishing projects, some in the millions of dollars, without Eran and Tawfic.)

Student Demand and Curriculum

In 1989, the Center offered two six-month programs. The expense and, frankly, slacking interest in six-month study-abroad programs in general meant that by 1990 we had changed to two semester-long programs and, initially, a single short program in the summer. If we were lucky, we would get 140 applicants for each of the three programs. Since this relatively low level of interest had budget implications, I once "complained" to President Faust that the building was too large. He told me that one day I would wish that the building were much larger. He was right, and almost immediately so. At the time, we took applications for the next program starting on a specified Monday at 8 a.m. As noted, we did so without any challenges, in that we had more housing for students than we had applicants. On a Monday morning in 1992, soon after the First Gulf War ended, my administrative assistant, Cheryl Hall, called me in a panic around 8:05 a.m. to say that when she arrived at the office there was a line of students and parents outside the entrance of BYU's Harman Building and up the sidewalk. By 8:30, she had received more applications than we had beds at the Center, and mail-in applications had not yet been opened. This wasn't a fluke: between 1992 and 2000, we had around three thousand applications each year. We quickly completed the first-floor student housing rooms I noted earlier, which increased the housing capacity from around 160 to around 170 students. We also moved to two semester-long programs (fall and winter) plus two term-length programs (spring and summer). Even so, President Faust had my arm twisted to the crown of my head to figure out ways to accommodate more students. In response, between 1996 and 2000 we had two slightly smaller summer-term programs of around 156 students each (we had to turn some student



A student apartment. Photograph by Mark Philbrick. Courtesy BYU Jerusalem Center.

housing into faculty housing) by doubling the expat faculty and housing half the students in the Galilee and half the students at the Center, each for half of the summer term (they switched places halfway through the program). At this point, we had five programs and enrolled around 830 students each year.

We solved the problem of queues and sleeping out overnight on the sidewalk in front of the Harman Building by selecting students via a random draw. All applications received in a two-week window had, and have today, the same chance of drawing out a placement. Despite pressures from donors, development officers, parents, stake presidents, and, on occasion, an administrator from the university, we have never put a finger on the scale to advantage a particular student. A story: I got a call from President Faust one day in which he said that I had made his wife, Ruth, very happy. “How so?” I asked. He responded, “Our granddaughter finally drew out for a Jerusalem Center position on her fourth try.” He’d never said a word to me, even though his granddaughter had been deeply disappointed on three previous applications. Each time someone tries to pressure me or claim that if their son or daughter were the grandchild of a General Authority or big donor our admissions decision would be different, I tell them the story of President Faust’s granddaughter. The always somewhat testy phone conversation ends with silence on the other end, and they don’t call again.

The Aftermath of the Start of the Second Intifada

The biggest changes in the Center's student programs began with the start of the Second Intifada in 2000 and continue to affect our programs to this day. Substantial unrest began in late September 2000. We brought 170 fall-program students home in November, about a month before the scheduled end of the semester, and cancelled the winter 2001 program, assuming that things would cool down and that, as with the First Gulf War, this would be a one-semester hiatus. When it became clear that the violence was going to last a while, we brought the expat faculty home, and then, a year later, the expat admin team. And in what was the single most difficult thing I've done in the past thirty years, in 2002 I flew to Jerusalem, and we laid off 60 percent of our local staff. These were loyal and devoted employees who had very little chance of finding jobs because of the collapse of tourism during the Second Intifada, but we had no students or student programs, no revenues, and with the uncertainty about when we would be able to resume student programs, we had to reduce our costs. We turned to Eran to manage the smaller workforce and the Center's activities and shifted service-couple assignments to focus on expanded community outreach and humanitarian efforts, which included continuing the concert series.

It took a long time for the security circumstances to change sufficiently that we felt we could approach the First Presidency about restarting the student program. President Faust was gently pushing for it, however, and in 2006 Presidency Hinckley agreed to discuss the matter, and Elder Holland, President Samuelson, and I met with him and his counselors. In anticipation of the meeting, President Hinckley had asked that I accompany two people from the Church's security department to the Holy Land to review the security situation so he was well briefed on the security challenges. The outcome of a fairly lengthy discussion was that we could resume student programs at the Center but with some restrictions. First, President Hinckley limited the program to a single bus group, with permission to increase to two bus groups at our discretion. However, we were not authorized to go beyond two bus groups without further discussion with the First Presidency. So we started with forty-two students in the winter semester 2007 program, moved to eighty-four the next semester and, because buses are slightly larger today, increased enrollment to eighty-eight students in each program starting in January 2020. Second, President Hinckley approved my recommendation that we appoint Eran Hayet as the Center's executive director. Third, President Hinckley imposed what we now call the

Hinckley Rule: no travel to sites on the West Bank except in-and-out field trips to Bethlehem and Jericho. Lastly, President Hinckley indicated that any program for students from BYU, BYU–I, BYU–H, or other CES institutions had to be administered by the Center. Recognizing that restricting the number of students to two bus groups might create problems with managing demand, President Hinckley also limited potential applicants to students enrolled at BYU, BYU–I and BYU–H, whom we, in turn, agreed to admit and provide grants to from our endowment on an institution-blind basis.

Since many of our field trips in the 1980s and 1990s had been in the West Bank, the Hinckley rule necessitated a quite different array of field trips, as did the challenging security situation in the Sinai, and Arnie Green, a BYU history professor in a Center slot, agreed to return to Jerusalem to design a new field trip program and supporting manuals. Except for a few tweaks, the field trip program hasn't changed to this day. One of the tweaks was to add a "fun trip": Most of the student groups organized their own trip to Eilat to snorkel in the Red Sea, but often a handful of students couldn't afford to join the others on this trip. So, we decided to bring the trip inside the Center's field trip program so that we could provide better support and so no one was left out. We mildly discourage faculty and service couple participation so that the students can just go off on their own as a group for the day.

We started with four programs in a 4-month–4-month–2-month–2-month format (fall, winter, spring, summer), but in a difficult decision trading off carrying capacity (that is, the number of students we can take each year) against quality, in 2009 we killed the two short programs and moved to three essentially identical semester-long programs: fall, winter and spring/summer (a 4-4-4 format). We also decided at the outset to expand to two out-of-country trips. In the 1990s, we had offered a trip to Egypt as an add-on after the semester ended. This created some problems, and since almost all of the students chose the add-on trip, we decided to incorporate Egypt along with Jordan as integral parts of the Center's field trip program. Because of health challenges in the heat, however, Egypt has always posed a problem in the summer. Unrest in Egypt has also created periodic challenges. So fairly soon after we moved to the 4-4-4 format, we substituted Turkey for the Egypt trips. But Turkey is cold in the winter, so when things settled down in Egypt, we decided to go to Turkey in the summer, to Egypt in the winter, and to choose one or the other in the fall. When security problems developed in Turkey and during times of unrest in Cairo, we have substituted

Greece for Turkey and Egypt. I'm reminded occasionally by faculty colleagues that Greece isn't in the Middle East. But it turns out that it has become a fabulous field trip, where students study the relevant parts of Acts and the Pauline letters to the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Corinthians. We also get to focus some on Jews in Europe and the effects of the Holocaust since Thessaloniki had a vibrant and large Jewish community until it was destroyed by deportations in WWII. In addition, students get an introduction to Orthodox Christianity with a visit to the monasteries in Meteora. And they get to visit the locations of ancient Macedonia, Delphi, Mycenae, and Athens. Turkey was great. Egypt is great. But so is Greece.

Adding a week-long out-of-country trip had to displace something, and we reduced the time in the Galilee from two-and-a-half weeks to ten days, which actually worked well because the agricultural kibbutzim where students worked during their stay in the Galilee in the 1980s and 1990s were no longer interested in volunteers.

Semester-long programs have become expensive, especially for ones like ours that include two out-of-country trips and an extended stay in the Galilee. But as I noted when I indicated that we had made a quality-versus-quantity choice in 2009, we want to maintain the quality that we believe is best done with semester-long programs. Generous donors have allowed us to offset some of the costs to students. Every student in each of the three programs now receives a \$1,500 grant, regardless of need, something we call a "universal grant." In addition, need-based grants are made to around 40 percent of the students in each program, all from specially donated money, not tithe funds.

Early on there were disagreements about the curriculum, particularly with regard to the Ancient Near Eastern history course. Was it just the "historical" Old and New Testament? Or was it something broader and different? We also had a very hard time finding a text for the course—nothing quite worked: available texts were either too much or too little. With some gentle prodding, the ANE history class emerged as a class consistent with its title, but one that gives more attention to the Holy Land than do traditional ANE history courses that start with the Mesopotamian civilization and move chronologically to the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations. The text problem was finally solved four years ago when Kent Jackson proposed to me that the Center publish a collectively written book. It has thirty-three chapters written by seventeen authors, most of whom are or were BYU faculty. It starts with the Mesopotamian civilization and ends with Palestine and the Crusaders. Kent was the editor.

Another problematic course was the Modern Near East (MNE), taught in 1989 and 1990 by both a Palestinian and an Israeli, but for almost a decade only by a Palestinian. It became abundantly clear that in a conflict, it wasn't possible to get a dispassionate, fair-to-both-sides perspective from a single local instructor. In 1998, we split the three-credit-hour course into two 1.5 credit-hour courses, hired an Israeli, and asked him and our Palestinian faculty member to develop courses that provided a modern historical narrative from their particular community's perspective. In 2007, we renewed this model and hired a Palestinian and an Israeli, one of whom teaches the "Palestinian narrative" and the other the "Israeli narrative" in separate two-hour MNE courses. Students then have to synthesize these two sometimes competing narratives. This is a challenge, but I'm confident that our students are up to it.

Having only two bus groups reduces our carrying capacity, but there is one very nice advantage: while each of the two OT/NT instructors manages a field trip bus, the ANE teacher goes on one bus and the associate director for academics goes with the second bus. On-site instruction is done by both faculty members in a team-teaching format that brings OT/NT and ANE history together. The smaller number of students has also permitted us to add field trips in the MNE area directed by our local faculty.

Lastly, we have faced a challenge in providing students a prearrival orientation to the Middle East. Since 1989, we've tried lots of different approaches, but none has worked very well. Our latest effort is to provide students with short, focused readings on Islam, Judaism, and the history of Jerusalem that they are to have read before they leave for Jerusalem. It's difficult to find materials that cover what we want covered at a level appropriate for our students. Kent Jackson again bailed me out and offered to write a book on Islam that was published by the Jerusalem Center earlier this year. I'd like to publish a comparable book on Judaism and, perhaps, a very short "only the highlights" history of Jerusalem.

The field trip program continues to be the "crown jewel" of the student program. In addition to out-of-country field trips to Jordan and either Egypt or Greece, a ten-night stay in the Galilee, and a fun trip to Eilat, students visit important biblical, archaeological, cultural, and historical sites from the Syrian and Lebanese borders on the north to Be'er Sheva on the south, and from the Mediterranean on the west to the Jordan River valley on the east. And, of course, students get to explore the Old City in depth over the entire semester.

This concludes my “short history” of the Center since 1989. I’m happy to take a few questions.

Q: What happens at the end of the lease?

A: We’re thirty-three years into a forty-nine-year lease. This initial lease is renewable once; it will automatically roll over for another forty-nine years unless we behave badly between now and the rollover date. Clearly, I have no reason to worry about any of this since we don’t have to face a postlease issue for another sixty-five years!

Q: What is the current ratio of applicants to acceptance?

A: We typically have around 150 applicants for 88 positions. So, its roughly 60 percent, with placements based, as noted earlier, on a random draw. [Note: Because of COVID-19, the Center’s student programs were suspended in May 2020 until at least May 2021, so as of the publication date of this volume, there are no students at the Center.]

Q: What’s the female-to-male ratio?

A: Two to one if we’re lucky. Our programs typically have around 28 or fewer men and 60 or more women.

Q: How can those of us who have gone help the Center now?

A: To quote Psalm 122, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” One of the reasons we have two rather than four bus groups (that is, 88 rather than 160 students) is because the risks, the environment and triggers that create risks, and the security challenges have changed substantially since the 1980s and 1990s. To be clear, the risks aren’t extraordinary (or we wouldn’t have student programs). We manage them well, but they are harder to manage in many ways than they once were. While there are scale economies in using the building with 160 students per program, there are substantial diseconomies in managing 160 students in terms of how you get them out of the country if needed or what you do with them if there are problems and you decide not to evacuate them. So, in a sense, the changing risks have limited our carrying capacity.

In this regard, the Middle East is no better today and in many ways more tense than it was twenty or thirty years ago. When I started going to Jerusalem thirty years ago, for example, you could go to cafés and find mixed audiences of Palestinians and Israelis. You seldom see Palestinians and Israelis in the same restaurants these days—the two

communities have moved further apart in the last thirty years; they haven't moved toward one another. This greater division between Palestinians and Israelis also creates security issues for us today that we didn't face earlier. So pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

I'll share one more story that involves President Faust. President Faust and I were walking arm in arm in gardens outside of the Garden Tomb, and at a fork in the path, there was the plea from Psalm 122, "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," chiseled into a stone. He said, barely audible, "We do, we do." I encourage all of us to do that.

Second, you can pay it forward. We've been enormously blessed by the generosity of people who donated money to the Center. Almost all of these donations were made in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These original donations have grown with the stock market over the past thirty years and now provide financial flexibility that is a great blessing to students. As I noted earlier, of the earnings on the endowment these donors created we're now spending about a half million dollars each year on humanitarian efforts that involve our students. We are spending in excess of a half million dollars each year on need-based student grants. And because of the generosity of donors, we also now provide every student, regardless of need, a grant of \$1,500 to help offset increased program costs. I encourage these students to pay it back when they can. At the orientation the day before they leave for Jerusalem, I remind them of the pioneer Perpetual Emigrating Fund and suggest that they might want to think about a perpetual education fund: to the degree that they can when they become financially able, they can help the next generation of students go to the Center. So, and let me be low-key about this because the purpose for this symposium wasn't to try to raise money, but for the former students in the room in particular, but also for nonstudents who care about the Center and its influence for good on students and in Jerusalem, I encourage you to think about contributing to support the next generation of Jerusalem Center students. The costs of doing business in Israel, as it has become a modern vibrant economy over the past fifteen or twenty years, have increased substantially—by far more than the rate of inflation. Contributions that aid students directly through grants and indirectly by funding some of the Center's activities that aren't funded by budgeted funds from Salt Lake City will—both immediately and particularly in the long run—make a substantial difference for the next generation of students.

Q: Any thoughts on a permanent building in the Galilee region?

A: Well, let me tell you a story. Soon after I came to this position, President Faust took me aside. President Faust was just wonderful. He was a mentor unlike any I will ever have in my life except for my father. And he had this interesting gesture I described earlier in which he would figuratively thump on my chest to emphasize a point. One day, early on, he said to me, “I’m going to tell you how much the Jerusalem Center cost to build because you have to insure it. There are six people in the Church who know how much it cost. You’re the seventh. There’s not to be an eighth,” (figuratively) thump, thump, thump. President Hinckley was well known for being very careful with money. He was frugal, and apparently he used to needle Elder Faust over the cost of building and then operating the Jerusalem Center. In fact, when I first started doing Center budgets, before the budget went to the university and then to the Church, Elder Faust would invite me to his office in Salt Lake City so that he could review the budget before President Hinckley saw it and be prepared for whatever discussion was going to occur. The other thing you need to know to understand this story is that the San Diego temple was, in a sense, a Gordon B. Hinckley building. To resume the story:

My wife and I were in Jerusalem with Elder and Sister Faust and Elder and Sister Holland shortly after the San Diego temple was dedicated. We were in the upper auditorium for a devotional. It was full of students. There was a Travel Study parent group in-country, so there were also lots of parents and other LDS tourists present. And, of course, there were local members at the meeting. Elder Faust got up and began his remarks by saying, “President Hunter and I were never so happy as on the day the San Diego temple was dedicated because then this became the second most expensive building the Church had ever built.”

Given this, I don’t think there’s a snowball’s chance in the proverbial place of the Church funding another building for student programs in the Holy Land. The Church has a presence in the Holy Land—the Jerusalem Center. It doesn’t need a presence elsewhere in the country. If you’ve been in the Center, it was built to a standard that is well above BYU’s standards for its buildings. It is a spectacular building. And as I said in my formal remarks, I view myself as custodian for the First Presidency in maintaining the Center to the standards to which they built it. It’s really not BYU’s building. It is somebody else’s building. And as Elder Holland made clear earlier today, it may have other purposes at

some point (which made Eran and me really nervous as we listened to him). So I'm quite certain that funding a building in the Galilee would have to be solely at BYU's initiative, if the Church permitted that.

In addition to the construction costs, however, it is really expensive to operate physical facilities abroad. Taxes, complying with local labor laws, finding and training local employees, and other legal issues (which seem never to end) are daunting challenges. The issues, particularly the costs of local employees, are compounded when a facility is used for only some, but not all, of the days of the year, as would be true for a facility in the Galilee. When I was a vice president, the university sold off study abroad buildings it owned in Europe. There was a long discussion about whether to sell off the building in London. Simply put, universities can't afford to have buildings abroad. The Center is a very expensive project, not just to build but to run. And I'm not giving anything away to tell you if you looked at the fraction of cost subsidized by tithe money, the Jerusalem Center is undoubtedly at the top of the list. It exceeds BYU, BYU-Hawaii, BYU-Idaho. So, for example, consider the personnel costs. In order to manage and maintain the Center, we have fifty-five local employees. So, if you think about the possibilities of a building in the Galilee, you need to consider construction costs, operating and maintenance costs, and permanent personnel costs that would, of course, benefit only a tiny fraction of students who enroll at BYU, BYU-I, or BYU-H. This is a long answer. The short answer is: There's no interest in building a permanent facility in the Galilee in Salt Lake City or Provo. By the way, given other program demands, we're only in the Galilee ten nights and eleven days each program, and Ein Gev, where we have stayed for years, is a wonderful place to stay. So why would we want to go a place other than Ein Gev? It is terrific.

Q: What does one term cost now?

A: It's currently just over \$13,000—so, netting out the universal grant of \$1,500 that we're currently providing, it's around \$11,500.

Q: Do you know why they closed the church building in Galilee?

A: I wasn't part of any discussion about that decision, but it is my understanding that virtually all the members moved away or passed away or found it increasingly difficult to travel from Nazareth and places further afield like Haifa to Tiberius on Saturday. It may interest you to know that as in the days before there was a Church facility in Tiberius, the Center has been authorized by the Jerusalem District president to have

sacrament meetings on the Saturday we're at Ein Gev. On that Saturday, we have sacrament meeting at Ein Gev but then spend part of the day at the Mount of Beatitudes.

Q: What is the future of the Center's music program?

A: I assume that this question is in reference to Neomi Weinstein's health. For everyone in the room, Neomi is a part-time Center employee who organizes the Sunday evening performance series. She went through a bout of cancer. She has bounced back. She is, if you know her, back to her usual self. She's doing great. She's now seventy-four years old, however, and one of the challenges that Eran has—that's an inside joke—that Eran and I have is to find her replacement. It will be very difficult. There aren't many irreplaceable people in the world, but Neomi may be one if we want to continue to have a Sunday evening concert series of the current quality and reputation. The concert series has such a splendid reputation and, as I said, represents in so many ways a Church presence that we can't lose it, but I don't know how to move to the next generation, frankly. [Note: Because of COVID-19, concerts at the Center were suspended in March 2020. In May, we were approached by former patrons and musicians about broadcasting live performances from the empty (except for the musicians and audio/visual technicians) upper auditorium. We agreed, and since mid-May, the Sunday evening concerts have been streamed live at 8:00 p.m. Jerusalem time over Facebook, Vimeo, and YouTube and are available from any one of those services after the live performance is concluded. There is now a modest, but loyal, worldwide audience for these performances originating from the Center.]

Thank you so much for coming. This has been a wonderful day.

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Breeze

What if our prayers were the wind to God,
and carried our thoughts like the smell of cut grass
and barbecued meat and skunk musk
and cow dung and tire-kicked dust?

Carried our thoughts to God,
standing in the sunlit fields of heaven—
our thoughts, collecting like cottonwood seeds
in the arches of his feet?

Cottonwood seeds, shifting and shivering like faith;
settling on his clothes;
clinging to the backs of his hands;
to his hair, in a wavering halo?

What if God went carefully about his hallowed work
there in the sifting, fitful air,
not wishing to dislodge a single thought
from its place with him?

—Daniel Teichert

This poem won first place in the 2019 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

Peace Offering

Elena Jarvis Jube

I killed a peace dove once.

It was spring. I was driving down a stretch of road lined with left-over remnants of apple and cherry orchards not yet bulldozed for new houses, new subdivisions. I don't know where I was coming from, down that particular road, though one corner of my brain thinks it might have been the hospital, and that I was anxious and strung out from lack of sleep, which is why I didn't see the dove in the road there, small, grey, invisible against the asphalt. I seem to remember it was early morning, the light just cresting the mountains like consolation, and I don't know why I would have driven down that stretch of road in the early morning unless it was home from one of those hospital visits. Besides, something in my memory wants to connect the accidental suffering and death of a bird with my own human confrontations with death. But now as I write, I'm not sure it was morning, or even sure about the light. It could have been afternoon or evening, might have been a trip to the grocery store. Vacuum repair. Something banal.

I know this much, this picture:

The trees beside the road are shedding apple blossoms, air and asphalt strewn with pink and white like a summer wedding.

A rush and a sudden spray of petals blow up over the hood of my car, over my windshield. A thump and a glimpse of widespread wings. And I understand: not just petals. Feathers. Dove-grey mixed with petal-white.

Behind me in the rearview mirror a snowy, mixed cloud of swirling feathers and apple petals—a bridal veil, or a spring snow—settling over the body of a dove, lying in the road.

It flutters twice, the wing bent up in a bloodied fan, petals falling all around.



I think, *I've killed a peace dove with my car*. My fingers flutter on my steering wheel, as if that wing were me, my hand. *I'm sorry. I'm so sorry*. Apologizing to the bird, to all birds, to the universe. And the image of that dove—beautiful, awful—somehow links itself in my brain to all other griefs I'd ever experienced, in a kind of grief-stream, water falling over rocks. Time runs in on itself, like the famous scene in Proust's *Time Regained*, where the taste of a madeleine cookie dipped in tea triggers a childhood memory. And I am back again, driving my youngest son to a hospital in Salt Lake City, calling my husband at work to tell him Eric needed emergency brain surgery, panicking as I listen to the sound of my child in pain.

It's odd the way the brain makes connections, the way a dove flies itself around a four-year-old grief, the way that grief rises up, sharp and raw again, for what's over and healed, the only evidence of my son's brain surgery a long scar covered up by his thick hair, the bump of a metal screw you can feel if you touch his head in just the right place, and the likelihood that he'll drop a ball if you throw it to him.



This is not the story of my son's death. It is not even the story of his grief.

He doesn't remember much. Pain does that, makes you forget.

This is the story of my grief, of my own brief confrontation with the possibility of the death of someone I love. Which doesn't sound like a huge deal, honestly. Other people suffer more, all the time, all over the world. I've read about the Russians' suffering under Stalin, under the tsars, all the people murdered or sent to the Gulag to freeze and starve. I've walked through the Holocaust museum and felt stunned by the magnitude of that crime, read Elie Wiesel's account in his book *Night*, how he was forced to watch babies thrown into burning ditches. We all read daily about the tragedies of wars, mass shootings in elementary schools and concerts, or movies and soccer games, about all the people who have nowhere to go, stranded and desperate at the border of my country because my government won't let them in. And I feel terribly, terribly guilty about all of it. I feel responsible. My child lived when others' children have died. My experience is mild compared to any of those things. It's ordinary, everyday.

But grief is still grief. And near-death feels almost the same as death; for a while it *is* the same, when you don't know which way events will turn. When Dostoevsky faced his own mock execution with a sudden, staged pardon at the last minute all planned in advance by the tsar, the terror leading up to that moment was the same as if the pardon had never come. To the prisoners, it was a kind of death.

For a moment you're standing at the brink of universal darkness and despair. Then, when everything is over and death retreats, you're left with that experience, like an awkward bundle. Heavy. Damp, maybe, still leaking blood.

My confrontation with the possibility of my child's death changed me. And the death of the dove I'd just killed with my car pushed that old hurt forward, made me want to spread it out so I could see, explore it in a way that helped me understand something true about my life. About suffering. About guilt and awe. And connection.



Horror and holiness are sometimes the same.

The awfulness of any brush with death invites a kind of reverence, a sense of being shocked into understanding that life is both illogical and astonishing even though it's everywhere, sometimes manifesting itself in annoying ways: a cloud of mosquitos, a moth that eats your sweater, a biting fly. And all the numberless irritations that go with every human relationship.

There's a reverence that goes along with taking time to acknowledge past suffering, the terrible fact that one group of humans tried to stamp out another group of humans, treated them recklessly, harshly, like an imitation of life instead of the real thing. Walking across a bridge in a Holocaust museum through a room lined with rows upon rows of names of entire villages slaughtered and people murdered in Nazi concentration camps becomes a bruising awareness that you're facing something sacred in the fact of remembering and grieving those deaths.

A friend told me once that he'd overheard a mother in a bookstore telling her daughter not to read a book about the Holocaust because it was too depressing. It's a tempting approach to take with pain—our own and others'. Why should we keep horror fresh in front of us?

My pain was a small thing, really. I should let it go. It's odd how in the middle of wondering whether my child would live or die or change in some fundamental way—lose his sight, have his brain permanently damaged after being opened up, drained, and then closed again—odd

how the whole thing felt slightly familiar—*déjà vu*—how I felt the same sense of holiness and horror as I did walking across that bridge in the museum, and then again with the dove—each memory opening up, as if each of those things were fundamentally connected.

The universe expanding into infinity.

You sort of wish it could all go back to being small again.



I thought I remembered everything about that time, but now I wonder, What have I blocked out, just as my son has, and what does that mean? All the events fold up inside each other, as though happening simultaneously. I try to fan them open, lay them out in order.

Eric called me up from a school trip to Lagoon, an amusement park, two hours after they'd left. "Can you come get me? I have a headache." He was fourteen, the park fifty-five miles away, and he'd been looking forward to this day for weeks, a reward from the school for good behavior or good grades. Or something.

"A headache? Still?" I remembered he went to bed with a little pain but said it was better that morning.

"Worse than last night. I lied so you'd let me go. It wasn't a little headache last night, either. It was pretty bad. It's okay. I just don't want to go on another rollercoaster."

When I drove the fifty-five miles up to Farmington, he was out in the parking lot waiting for me, alone. When I saw the way he sagged, the splotchy red of his face, how he slept all the way home, I thought about calling the doctor, and then I didn't. I mean, it was a headache. *Flu*, I thought. *Allergies, possibly*. Eric always had terrible spring allergies.

Three days later, with no other flu or allergy symptoms, I figured it had to be a migraine. The illogic of that still surprises me.

The phone call from Lagoon wasn't the beginning, I think now. It was the middle. How long had that headache been going on before he lied so he could ride on rollercoasters? I don't remember—don't remember when I called the doctor, either. I do remember calling my brother. Headaches run in my family. My dad remembers my grandfather having weekly Sunday headaches. When my sister was ten, she went temporarily blind because of a migraine. My daughter's headaches began in fifth grade. I have headaches and vision disturbances whenever my sleep patterns are off. And my brother has a long list of foods he won't eat because they trigger migraines. He's also a math professor—not that a PhD in math makes him a headache expert, but he's analytical and his migraines are frequent and debilitating. I knew he'd have studied up on the options.

“Do your migraines ever last three days?” I asked him.

“Sometimes. Not often.” He told me to try caffeine pills and Tylenol—or maybe he didn’t say Tylenol. I’m only sure about the caffeine because of what it did. I don’t know why I never considered the possibility that anything could be wrong other than the family migraine trait. Why didn’t I call the doctor?



An offering: My bishop asked me to give a talk in church that week, and I didn’t want to. I said yes because I didn’t have a decent reason to say no. For some reason, I spoke on adversity, but I wasn’t thinking of my own. I was thinking of my sister, going through her own trauma, and especially of a friend whose healthy sixteen-year-old died a few months before when flu turned into sepsis. The words I wrote and spoke in church felt like a gift—from God to me, from me to God, and to some people I loved who were hurting. Later I found my talk ironic. I couldn’t re-read it for a long time. I didn’t want to hear any lessons from myself about why adversity is good.

Eric missed my talk. He was home with a headache. He also missed a scuba-diving trip he had been looking forward to for a month. I wouldn’t let him go, but he didn’t want to anymore. Was that day three?

I remember things in threes. A three-day headache. A three-week headache. Going to three pediatricians we didn’t know three separate times because it was the weekend and our regular pediatricians were out of town. Three times the doctors doing neurological tests and finding nothing. Three diagnoses that matched my amateur one: a severe migraine lasting a strangely long time. I remember being utterly convinced and trying to convince the doctors, too: this was a migraine. I suspect myself of having persuaded all three to a false diagnosis. *The family trait has come out strong in my kid.* Of course it was a migraine—a terrible extended one. My daughter used to sleep with her head on a book instead of a pillow during headache episodes, I told the doctors. She sometimes moaned with pain, too. Sometimes she’d throw up. Headaches are horrible.

An image: thirty minutes after taking a caffeine pill, my son banging his head against the wall in his room, yelling and crying.

A second image: My son walking across the street and banging his head against the ground in the neighborhood park, thumping his fists on the grass, yelling and crying. Me walking him back across the street, helping him onto the couch.

Eric doesn’t remember any of this. He blinks at me, surprised, when I mention it, as if hearing a story about someone else. He tells me not to

talk about it, as if something in his subconscious is warning him, *Don't open that box*, but I can't stop remembering once I start. I keep thinking how I was the one who gave him the little pill that made him bang his head on the ground in the park.



I got on the phone with the doctor again after that. “Check him again,” I said. “I think he's not okay.”

They did and couldn't find anything. A Sunday after-hours clinic, a battery of simple neurological tests: eye-tracking, touching finger to nose, muscle strength, grip, balance. Everything normal. *Well, of course there isn't neurological damage*, I thought stupidly. *Can't anybody fix a two-week migraine around here?* The doctor suggested Excedrin. I shook my head. Excedrin contains caffeine. I was not going to watch that again.

On Tuesday one of our regular pediatricians finally got back in the office. I told him the whole story, and he admitted my son to the hospital. Bizarrely, even then I still didn't believe it was anything very serious, but I was glad they were checking him out.

I remember feeling clearheaded and calm, concerned but cerebral, detached, rational, practical. I kept a record of events, of what we'd done to treat it, who we'd gone to see, so I could talk to the doctors intelligently. Those notes are lost. Maybe I never wrote them. I can't find anything I've written about this time in any journal or diary. Yes, I am a writer, but I haven't kept a regular journal since high school. I write novels. Imaginary stuff. There's nothing to refer to when I try to dredge up memories.

A skeleton scene: the pediatrician crouching down beside me with the MRI films in the hospital room, showing me the balloon-space inside my son's skull—a baseball-sized cyst, he said.

Me: *Yes, it does look like a baseball. Inside my son's head. Why is there room for a baseball inside my son's head?*

Him: “It might be fine. People are born with cysts in their brains all the time and never know. See how his brain has grown around it?”

I knew—absolutely, clearly, rationally—it wasn't fine.

Another phone call two hours later: A neurological specialist had spotted fluid leaking into the outer cerebral membranes, putting pressure on the brain. We needed to move Eric to a specialty hospital immediately. They could send him in an ambulance, or I could drive him.



I listened to the sound my son made on his pillow for an hour as I drove him to Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City.

Moan isn't the right word. I can't think of a better one. I was hearing something for which there isn't a word in my language. I search the thesaurus for alternatives: *groan*, *sough*, *wail*. *Keen*, *complain*, *squeak*.

Sough: a moaning, whistling or rushing sound, pronounced "suff"—which sounds like "suffering," but the sound coming out of my child was nothing like a whistle.

Keen: too high-pitched. *Moan*: too soft, with its slurry "m" and long open, rolling "o." *Groan* is better—that growl at the beginning—but the "o" rolls and softens what should be guttural, deeper, more awful. It's an Old English word, of Germanic origin. Possibly the stoic Saxons and their Anglo-American descendants didn't like to speak openly about their trauma.

Neither do I.

Detachment. Even as writers exploring our motives and experiences in personal essays, we admire restraint, understatement. Talking about pain feels sentimental, sappy, and, especially, whiny.

I am not detached. I am without the right words. A kind of muteness.



If I hadn't been so sure a leaking arachnoid cyst was a migraine, how many days of my child's pain might I have eliminated? Seven? Three? Fourteen? How much pain am I responsible for?



When you believe someone who should not die might be about to anyway, grief lays you out, spreads you flat. The universe has stuck its shoe on top of you, and you have nothing left to say to it. Your words have gone flat too. You feel you never had any words to begin with.

It's like the moment in a tour through a deep mountain cave when the forest service guide turns off the lights. You stand there and wait for your eyes to adjust, and when they do, you see only perfect dark, a kind of wall-wrapping absence of light around your face, neck, and body, there in the belly of the earth, underneath all things. Someone laughs because it's so awful, and for one minute you see how vulnerable you are.

The whole thing feels somehow beautiful too. Transcendent. Outside time.



You cradle the grief in your hands and rock it, like a wounded baby.



I don't want to write about any of this. It's not a big deal. Nobody died. Everyone's fine. I begin to type, then stop, go get a drink. I walk upstairs and walk back down. It's none of anyone's business.

An organ without stops. A high-school English teacher handed me that metaphor of myself because I wouldn't write about anything I felt without mocking it. A good image: all that potential force and air and sound, no way to express it. Maybe that's why I write fiction—then it's not me; it's just some character in some novel. An imaginary character can suffer too, but it's not my suffering, not exactly. I don't have to be vulnerable in the same way.

The main character in my current novel is mute.

I sit back down at my computer feeling raw.

I wonder if any language has a word that captures both the sound and sense of agony. Russian might, but I don't know enough of that language to say; I only know the noun that means pain, hurt, sickness: *bol*. The Russians know trauma, their literature an enormous dictionary of suffering. All those centuries of terror under the tsars, and then nearly another century under the communists—even the land, with its impossible cold, wraps the people in suffering. Cold Russian winters helped defeat both Napoleon and Hitler, while the Russians hung on, enduring. Russian writers have devoted entire novels to the idea of embracing suffering. Russians used to have suffering clubs, my Russian-teacher mom tells me. People could only belong if they'd gone through enough trauma. They compared their suffering, bragged about it, held it up like a hunting prize.

My mom smiles wryly. My dad got arrested within minutes of stepping over the border into Russia after a three-year mission to Finland during the late 1950s, and my parents lived for three years in Russia—first in Moscow, then in Siberia—as mission presidents supervising Church missionaries, one of whom was murdered in Ufa while they were there. My parents have had their taste of Russian cold, but these things are nothing that would get you into a Russian suffering club.



Once I heard a presentation by a writer who claimed books can heal traumatized children. He talked about mirror neurons that respond in an empathetic person's brain when they are shown the image of another person in pain—the empath's brain lighting up in the same place where the neurons light up in the injured person's. Writing can trigger that kind of empathic response, he said, and bring about literal, physical healing for a child who reads about another child's trauma.

Laurie Sheck traces the origin of the word for empathy from a German word, *Einfühlung*, meaning “the ability to feel into.” “*To feel into*—which doesn’t mean to understand, or analyze, or interpret, or heal. Doesn’t mean to solve, define, make steady, claim knowledge of, but has something to do with drawing close, with how there’s a radiance more mysterious, more unspeakable than horror; more private in its wounds, more lasting.”¹

A mother cannot separate her child’s grief from her own. She “feels into” on a cellular level, in a primal way. Her blood once ran through his veins; the cells of his body began dividing inside hers; her life made his eyes, his liver, his skin, his hands, his brain with its neurons, now lighting up all over with crazy pain.

My child’s grief *is* mine. And then new grief layers over my borrowed grief because I know I don’t feel everything he feels and can’t take any of it away.

But Eric didn’t feel grief. He felt unspeakable physical pain. And I didn’t experience physical pain, except in the sense that emotional pain creates a physical response, a stab in the gut, a headache. Not his headache. My own.

His experience is something I can’t know. “The soul of another is a dark place,” Dostoevsky’s Prince Myshkin says in *The Idiot*.² We can none of us ever know another person’s experience. We can “feel into.” We can imagine. We can’t know.

I wonder if empathic healing can work backward. I picture my mirror neurons lighting up in my brain as I listen to that nameless sound, feel my brain reaching out to my child’s brain while fluid from a huge cyst leaks into his arachnoid membrane, pushing against soft, grey cerebral tissue, my neurons taking on that suffering, as though my taking it on could ease his a little, could take it away. Does it, just a tiny bit? I want it to, more than anything. The worst is hearing it as I drive, watching, not able to stop it.

I’d never heard of mirror neurons and empathic healing until long after that car ride, after the surgery, after Eric’s pain was gone, the wound healed, scar barely visible even if you’re searching.

When I remember, it all feels present.

Fenestration of arachnoid cyst is the name for what the doctors do, they inform me. This means they cut away a cookie-sized piece of skull,

1. Laurie Sheck, “Dostoyevsky’s Empathy,” *Paris Review*, November 11, 2016, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/11/11/dostoevskys-empathy/>.

2. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, a new rendition by Anna Brailovsky, based on the Constance Garnett translation (New York: Random House, 2003), 247.

poke holes in the cyst, insert a drain, put all the pieces back together with metal plates and screws. I try not to think of Humpty Dumpty but can't help it.

I know in French *fenêtre* means “window,” so *fenestration* makes sense. Opening a window into the cyst so the leaking fluid has a place to go. They're also fenestrating my son's skull, opening a window into his head, which invites a range of implicit meanings, as if they're planning an invasion of his private thoughts and feelings. *The soul of another is a dark place.*

The resident surgeon holds up her hands to show the size of the cookie she means: three, four inches in diameter, a Granny's cookie, one of those huge homemade chocolate-chip discs. This is no Chips Ahoy.

Me: *Why are we comparing this to food?*

The resident surgeon is cheerful. “It's a pretty common surgery. Should go well.”

I'm glad it's not experimental, that the surgeons have done this many times before. But I'm bothered by her choice of words. “Common” makes it feel trivial. A nosebleed. A scraped knee. As if suffering is ordinary.

Which of course it is.

Eric doesn't move, eyes closed—seemingly asleep. But as soon as the resident leaves, he says, outraged, “A cookie-sized piece of my *skull?*”

They keep testing his eyes. His vision is fine—a good sign, but if the pressure continues, he will go blind, then suffer other neurological damage. Death, eventually.

Everything should be fine. A common surgery. Not worth worrying about.

My husband is there by then, and Eric's brother. They chat and joke, try to cheer him up. Eric lies still, eyes closed, concentrating. He can't be present with us. He is visiting the Suffering Club.

Some neighbors call, and my mom, but I don't want to speak to anyone. I keep thinking about my friend whose sixteen-year-old son died of flu in this same hospital, and I think, *This is what she felt.* Watching her son join the Suffering Club. Falling into a cave with the lights off. The universe squashing you with its shoe. I keep thinking, *Every human on earth experiences something like this sometime during their lives. Because death is a thing. It exists. It's common. Universal.*

I think of Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov, who couldn't believe in God because children suffer. My mirror neurons are going crazy. Suddenly I'm crying for the suffering of all children, for my child, for all suffering mothers, for the common suffering of the human race. And for my

myself, because I have to suffer, too. I sit in the hospital room and try not to let anyone see me sob.

I had forgotten that part until I wrote it just now.



And then it was over. Nobody died. Nobody went blind. The doctors put my child back together with metal plates and screws—forget Humpty Dumpty. He came out of surgery with half his head shaved and a drain coming out of his skull through crisscrossing stitches. Eric thinks he looks like an alien, like Frankenstein’s monster.

Sometimes joy after grief looks like Frankenstein’s monster.

Three days after coming home from the hospital, Eric had a seizure, banging his head against the kitchen floor, over and over, couldn’t stop. I was gone, running some errand; his sister, Carrie, out of the room, so he went through it alone. He doesn’t remember that, either, but his sister does. Carrie’s eyes still fill up when she remembers and tells me about it.

Mirror neurons.

Here’s what Eric remembers: a summer of no biking, running, swimming, playing ball, jumping on trampolines, or getting on a longboard—how frustrating that was, how he hated everything. He remembers the huge red picture of the cartoon Tasmanian Devil that hung straight across from his hospital bed, all fierce and full of teeth, like a metaphor, and how he made us cover it up with a sheet so he wouldn’t have to look at it. I remember laughing at his grumpiness, cheerful because he was alive and getting better. I remember in the hospital two days after the surgery the anxiety of watching my bright fourteen-year-old struggle to put together a simple child’s puzzle, and then how six months later he was up on the mountain, skiing, and a couple of years after that, earning A-grades in chemistry and physics, and how they didn’t feel like just a couple of As. They felt like morning sun cresting the mountains.

It wasn’t death. It only looked like death for a minute, and then death said, “Never mind, I’ll leave you with some scars and metal in your skull instead. A decent trade.”

Eric is glad he has forgotten. He vaguely remembers something about a cookie-sized piece of skull and incredible pain and knows he doesn’t want to go there, even now. He doesn’t want to talk about it, doesn’t want me to talk about it, wants it not to have happened.

But it feels as if I’ve opened a window of my own, a *fenêtre*, fenestrating my head to let something out, and maybe something in. Understanding, light, a sense of connecting to something larger, to the suffering of the world.



In Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Alyosha's beloved Father Zosima tells how his dying brother got up every morning and apologized to the birds, because, he explained, if he were only a better person, the world would be a better place for that bird, for all birds, for all humans everywhere. We are all guilty before everyone and everything, he says joyfully, before "each and all," a phrase Dostoevsky's characters repeat again and again, as they find joy in the face of their own suffering. In other words, embracing suffering allows a kind of transcendence of it, like a firebird reborn from ashes, flying across the sky in a glitter of hope. As if saying, yes, to love is to suffer, and to embrace suffering is to embrace connection, and to love and be vulnerable and feel connected to someone else—to everyone else—is to begin to live. To walk through a Holocaust memorial to another people's agony and weep on their behalf is to turn that awful wrongness into a kind of redemption. "Any man's death diminishes me," John Donne famously said. But maybe it's more like, "My willingness to suffer enlarges me." Or simply, "Blessed are they that mourn," as Jesus said, a reminder of the connection between grief and love, that all our sorrow for another person matters.

Suffering, pain, grief, joy, horror, holiness, awe: These things mysteriously link and wrap around each other like vines, tree roots, mold, and moss in a forest ecosystem. And wrap around us. Grieving together in a kind of holy communion with the whole earth, with "each and all."



I am still haunted by that dove.

The image feels both gruesome and deeply holy, a small symbol of the Suffering Club of the world.

I pause, holding my son's pain again for a minute. Rocking mine because I can see it needs to be taken out and rocked. The image of the dove stays in front of my eyes, beautiful, awful, carrying with it a sense, almost, of having stepped outside time: A spray of pink and white petals and dove-grey feathers, flying up in a cloud in front of my windshield. A line of light—real or imagined—tracing the shape of the mountain. A fanned and bloodied wing.

This essay by Elena Jarvis Jube tied for first place in the 2020 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

The Road to Dallas

Kimberly Webb Reid

On November 21, 1993, the world dozed in watery light and I felt off-balance as the northern hemisphere listed away from the sun. Seasonal blues made watching PBS all day seem like a reasonable choice. Onscreen, a Ford Lincoln Continental zipped through Zapruder's frame. Tomorrow would be the thirtieth anniversary. Old news footage aired to commemorate the assassination, and I watched as if America's end of innocence were happening live along with my own. Seeing Jackie statuesque in bloodied nylons, I mourned like I'd discovered the thirty-fifth president was my long-lost grandfather. I was thirteen and had never heard of Camelot when I became a believer.

A few years later, I went to college and roomed with Mak, a high-school friend who went by her initials. Greaves Hall sported a rusty fallout shelter sign—a relic from before Kennedy told Krushchev to point his Cuban missiles the other way. Now our basement could host movie nights and block the noise of a timer wailing upstairs like an air-raid siren as the oven incinerated Mak's forgotten tater-tots.

Mak hung beads in our doorway and magazine clippings everywhere else because her sisters had established the truth that freshmen décor must be funky. I taped one picture over our bunks. The 1951 Newport debutante of the year would guard my sleeping subconscious and program me to keep it classy. At my age, Jackie studied at Vassar and aimed for Paris, but I couldn't afford a French finishing experience. I'd intuit one by imagining she was watching me, judging.

Jackie's glare had no effect on Mak. She walked barefoot around campus wearing a leopard-print blanket tied around her shoulders and

her sister's dairy princess tiara, but she pivoted from cape-wearing kid to doting dorm mom when the occasion warranted. One day she hauled me in to the health clinic and paid for the visit because I was too food-poisoned to care. I paid her back, but she never cashed the check.

If she had come with me when I visited our hometown for the weekend, maybe I wouldn't have gone bowling with friends of a friend and felt compelled to pretend I didn't need gutter bumpers around these strangers. Christa and Ethan were my age but so much older. They could have been on the cover of *Life*, looking regal in rented shoes like Jackie did in pearls. Christa and I were both tall redheads, I the splotchy variety with invisible eyelashes and she the porcelain—auburn and striking. I missed all but a few pins the whole night. She laughed with me like bowling was supposed to be a joke.

Back in the bomb shelter, Mak glitter-glued magazine clippings to her aloe vera's pot and supplied the plant with a pet gummy shark. In a few years, she'd teach English in China, maybe go on a mission, and then meet her husband. "I had a dream I was in a relationship with someone who looked like Tyler Robinson, but not him," she said. Tyler had been a senior when we were freshmen and probably didn't know who we were. "Someday I'll be with my husband, and I'll remember my dream and say, 'Oh, so you were the one I saw!'" Mak was psychic sometimes. She lived like there was a red carpet laid out to her future and all she had to do was walk barefoot out the door.

Not a carpet, she discovered years later. A thread. "In China, there's a belief that an invisible red thread ties people who are destined to meet," she would later explain. "The thread can be stretched or tangled, but never broken."

Maybe it was the mystical Thread of Fate making me feel adrift when I watched a BYU fireside and saw Christa and Ethan smiling in the audience like ambassadors from an alternate world. I'd always known I'd never become the fancy photojournalist-turned-First-Lady pinned to my wall; it was too far a stretch. But Christa and Ethan exuded a cozier version of Kennedy class. Its sparkle shone so close to home it had visited Heber City's Holiday Lanes, of all places. Almost within my reach. I couldn't afford Paris, but I could go to Provo.

Mak frowned as I packed the Jackie photo away, but I trusted we'd stay connected as she prepared for China and I went looking for Camelot. Mak wouldn't come across the red-thread theory for almost two decades, and already I was a believer.



The idea of the universe as one giant string maze is appealing to tentative souls like me. If there's a thread with my name, I don't need to agonize over every crossroad. I need only follow the yarn, like Theseus in the labyrinth. But that kind of thinking is also intimidating. If there's one right way, there must be infinite ways to get tangled up and bump into dead ends, as it seems most people do, some more infamously than others.

On the morning of Kennedy's impending demise, he had a premonition. "Last night would've been a hell of a night to assassinate a president," he said to his wife of the jostling crowds and dark raincloud cover. "If somebody wants to shoot me from a window with a rifle, nobody can stop it, so why worry about it?"

That's the thing about being psychic only sometimes. You never know when to listen to yourself.



Mak met Dave sooner than planned. She'd ditched the cape but still seemed young to get married. The date was set, then canceled, then set again. In the midst of the drama, Mak's mom observed, "Dave looks like Tyler Robinson, doesn't he?" Mak had forgotten her dream.

Wearing a Mandarin-style sheath dress she picked up at a consignment store, Mak married with the promise that she and Dave would teach English in Asia together. Except Dave backed out. They moved to Arizona instead and had a baby. When I visited them six months later, I felt static crackling as soon as they met me at baggage claim. Thunderstorms poured on the desert that night as Mak whispered about scanning for exits. Prophetic dreams or not, she had discovered that Camelot was—in the astute words of Monty Python—only a model.

I wondered why, for so long, I'd turned a blind eye to the real lessons Jackie offered. They weren't all about poise and fashion. She was also a savvy editor who had pulled off the best substantive job of her career in the wake of the assassination. Jackie redacted history, composed a fairytale, and buried the shame of a shoddy marriage beneath an eternal flame. The truth was out now for anyone willing to read it: JFK was a rake. There had never been any Camelot, only staged photos and shallow anecdotes finessed into a narrative arc to serve up a sad but meaningful ending.

I should have seen the reality check coming. Not long after my PBS binge, my mom showed me a photo her brother Bob had mailed home from his 1966 military assignment in Hawaii. Jackie glanced past my

uncle's camera with what seemed like a strained smile. She looked faded, missing some makeup or maybe just lacking the glamour of professional lighting, as she stood sandwiched between pictures of my own average family. I could have taken that photo to hang on my wall, but something about its ordinariness made me uncomfortable. Almost like it was telling a lie.



After the Phoenix weekend, I went home to my Church magazines job, where I shaped based-on-true events into inspirational stories by leaving out minutiae and polishing highlights to a shine. I had learned all about staging photos, but I aimed to illustrate the heart of truth and not fabricate myths. I, too, had grown up to be a professional editor. I managed to travel the world without gaining much style and ignored feeling lonely as I trudged to my office past Temple Square brides. Colored sashes were popular then, and often a splash of red stood out against white wedding dresses. The happy couples' regular presence made me think about marriage more often than a 1950s debutante.

At general conference, newlyweds cleared out and magazine photographers closed in on the masses. Then photos papered my office hallway floors. Designers paced, scouting for compelling images to print alongside sermons. When the conference issue landed on my desk, I scanned the pages to see which pictures made the cut. Two people I recognized stood frozen midstep, holding their laughing toddler's hands as they lifted her toes off the ground. Christa and Ethan's daughter looked as captivating as Caroline Kennedy dancing in the Oval Office, but this moment hadn't been calculated to generate public approval. Their candid happiness awakened a dormant hope inside me. They weren't mascots of an impossible ideal but messengers promising that something genuinely idyllic had visited the plaza outside my workplace—almost within my reach. If I was ever tempted to forget, they'd reappear in the magazine.

Eventually my sense of fairness overrode my secret fangirling, and I sent the photography team a memo. It wasn't fair to the other thousands of conference attendees that Christa was noticed so often only because she had hair the color of goldstone. Then I remembered: photos were printed in grayscale for the selection process. It wasn't Christa's hair that stood out to BYU camera operators, Church magazine designers, and bowling alley tagalongs. Her modest elegance made her an easy symbol of the quintessential Latter-day Saint woman the same way the media

loved portraying Kennedys as trendy but otherwise typical Americans. My chances of achieving Christa's level of normal were as unlikely as my moving into the White House.

And yet unlikely things happen all the time. Once a young serviceman inched toward the gangway with his platoon, waiting to board a Vietnam-bound ship, when he and a marine named Oswald were ordered to step out of line. Without explanation, they were reassigned to Hawaii. My family has speculated that perhaps the military brass decided last minute not to send an Oswald to fight communism, but even if that were true, we can't figure any reason my uncle was picked to go with him. Uncle Bob surfed and sent home a picture he took of Jackie Kennedy and never knew why he didn't go to war. Sometimes the red thread makes no sense.

Other times, the unlikely is too meaningful *not* to see some design in it. One day as I sat in a photography brown-bag meeting at work, watching a professional photographer's slideshow of all the happy families his lens had captured, I tried to calculate the chances of my going home to an empty house for the rest of my life. A familiar image blinked onto the wall.

"I stalked this family to get that shot," the photographer beamed.

Here they were again, still smiling and lifting their giggling toddler off the ground. What were the odds of my running into Christa and Ethan yet again? They stood suspended by light in my space like angels checking in to confirm their original message hadn't been lost. *Keep believing. Someday you might be more like us.* A tenuous link had stayed intact over the years, never breaking, though it seemed an impossible stretch. If I could believe that, I could believe in almost anything.



Within a year or two, I found a fiancé. We agreed to pose for a Church magazines photo shoot, a favor to a coworker. How chic were we? Not very. Even the best lighting and staging couldn't completely alter the facts.

Mak and Dave made peace and moved to Dallas, while Russ and I went to D.C.—not the White House, but a whitewashed condo overlooking the beltway. Beyond the sea of silent headlights, an eternal flame flickered.

One summer afternoon, we took our young daughter for a walk in Arlington. Kennedy's weak flame licked at the oppressive air as if depressed to still be burning in this humidity. I wondered how Jackie

had managed to get such an ostentatious grave marker approved. Did the expense of a president's monument depend only on how dramatically he exited office? To me, Kennedy's legacy included at least as many embarrassments as victories, the most offensive being his predatory lust for a legendary number of mistresses. Feeling smug, I decided Jackie had chosen an apt symbol for her husband's memory after all.

And yet, if I harbored such disdain, why had I braved the miserable heat index to pay my disrespects?

"Be quiet," I whispered to my fidgety daughter. "This is considered a sacred place." A few tourists wiped away tears. We milled around the memorial the way I had circled Kennedy myths, as if we could discover a more satisfying ending than the one Jackie had constructed. Now she lay beneath the flame she helped ignite. Flanking the famous graves, two smaller markers were framed in stone and moss:

Baby Daughter. August 23, 1956.

Patrick Bouvier Kennedy. August 7, 1963–August 9, 1963.

I felt a jolt of kinship when I noticed the dates. My brother had died in August too, the same way Patrick had gone, struggling for breath with premature lungs while his mother awaited word at another hospital. Before Patrick was transferred, some say Jackie reached into his incubator to stroke his hair. My mom can't remember the only time she saw my brother alive, but my dad watched mother's and son's gurneys pass en route to recovery and the waiting helicopter. My mom reached into my brother's Isolette and held his tiny hand.

Now my own August baby strained against the chain rope, an only child because two others hadn't made it. The prominent and presidential names illuminated by sun and fire—lauded and slandered by press and people like me—dimmed in comparison to the unwritten titles they bore. Mother. Father. Hurting humans following the red thread to the same place we're all going, some more infamously than others.



After Russ's government stint, he got an academic job at North Texas. I carried the pain of a third miscarriage onto our flight for Dallas because we couldn't delay our move for another private calamity. Russ was already starting his teaching job a week late after attending a conference in Xi-an.

"How come he gets to go to China before me?" Mak had pouted when I'd told her our summer plans.

The agenda hadn't included my waiting in a hospital radiology exam room, listening past my own pulse for a fluttering fetal heartbeat. My

womb was as lifeless as the terra cotta warriors. Russ brought me five sets of hand-painted chopsticks, but one dropped and shattered. I considered it an omen that our family was destined to stay small. At least we could always sit together on a plane.

During liftoff, I remembered the Kennedy documentaries I'd binge-watched while on bedrest to distract myself with someone else's tragedy. Jackie had barely recovered from giving birth when she accompanied the president to a city neither she nor I wanted to go to, but it seemed she was at peace. Perhaps Patrick's thirty-eight-hour life had brought his wandering father home. Now, filled with dread and resolve, the first couple set out to win back "nut country," as Kennedy called it. Nothing says *fail* like a big white X in the road.

I didn't want to live in nut country, but it was the only offer we had.

As I surveyed the Dallas landscape from afar, I latched onto the idea that God, with his infinite string maze, was pulling us toward a Texan we were destined to meet, a doctor qualified to discover why I lost children faster than Jackie Kennedy. In the quiet hours after the documentaries ended, I had researched physicians and narrowed my choice down to two. The first had an alternative-leaning practice out in the country, and the other was a renowned obstetrician who served on Parkland's board.

I imagined being sent to the hospital for another emergency ultrasound. I'd pass an unassuming plaque on my way out, the marker of a nation's desolation adding weight to my own. *Original Site. Trauma 1. November 22, 1963.* Parkland's radiology department stands where Jackie kissed her dead husband's body from bare foot to face in an intimate moment she couldn't have staged.

When I heard that story, I wavered. Maybe Camelot wasn't an intentional manipulation but the same grasping we all do at funerals when we cling to rare and poignant scenes as if they are the whole. Jackie walked out of Parkland wearing her husband's blood like it was a messy thread lashing his departed spirit to hers, and she didn't want to let it go. I knew if I ever set foot in that hospital, I would feel her ghost walk with me. I chose the country doctor.



Though I didn't feel any pull toward Dallas, Mak claimed she felt it for me. "I always knew you'd end up here," she said. After we landed, she loaded us down with groceries. I wrote her a check. She never cashed it.

She and Dave soon caught a plane to Shanghai and brought home a daughter who had been waiting for them since before Mak searched for a path out of Phoenix. Their threads had been stretched and tangled, but

never broken. Mak knew she'd teach English someday. She just didn't know it would happen in Texas.

"Maybe we should adopt," I mused to Russ. What if, while I prayed for a heartbeat, our Chinese child's heart was already beating in rhythm to Russ's footsteps walking the roads of her homeland? It was a nice thought, but we didn't feel moved by it.

We still wait, tentative souls, watching our narrative emerge. There are pictures of terra cotta warriors and an incomplete set of chopsticks in an ornate wooden box. There are visits to the eternal flame and an X on Elm Street, and there are consultations with angelic messengers wearing scrubs, explaining the results of an alternative-leaning blood test. Trees shed their amber leaves on a solstice morning when my world sighs back toward the sun and a second daughter is born. The sunlight is so blinding in that Texas hospital room I almost forget what came before, the bumbling in darkness and feeling our way past fraying places. Someday I'll pick out the tangles, trim the ugliest parts, and splice the highlights together so seamlessly I'll believe they're the truest pieces, the only ones worth retelling, even to myself. I'll believe again in the myth—or maybe it's the truth. Camelot was here all along.

This essay by Kimberly Webb Reid tied for first place in the 2020 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.

*The Pearl of Greatest Price:
Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture*
By Terryl Givens with Brian M. Hauglid

New York: Oxford University Press, 2019

Reviewed by Richard Lyman Bushman

The Pearl of Great Price is the least intentional of Latter-day Saint scriptures. When British mission president Franklin Richards pulled together a fifty-six-page assemblage of miscellaneous writings in 1851, he showed no signs of thinking that it prefigured an addition to the canon. He thought the items would be useful for instructing missionaries and members in gospel doctrine. The writings were widely distributed as a pamphlet but not considered scripture until canonization was proposed, almost casually, in 1880, in the same meeting where John Taylor was sustained as Church President. Unlike the Book of Mormon, which arrived as another Bible and was instantly treated as scripture, and the Book of Commandments, which was adopted as canonical immediately upon publication, the Pearl of Great Price crept in from the sidelines. Yet when it was proposed, it was adopted without opposition. Within twenty-nine years, it had become a treasured collection that the Saints loved and used.

In this extraordinary commentary on this least likely of scriptures, Terryl Givens argues that among all our canonized books, the Pearl of Great Price is the richest source of distinctive Latter-day doctrines. Pound for pound, the much longer Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants pack less of a theological punch. Doctrinally, the Book of Mormon did not go far beyond the Bible; it was believed and accepted precisely because it corresponded so closely. The Doctrine and Covenants is studded with doctrinal gems like section 76 but is preoccupied with organization and Church administration. The Pearl of Great Price, in a much briefer span, provides a broad scriptural basis for the theology that distinguishes the Latter-day Saint gospel from its Christian antecedents.

At the same time, this rich source is a book rent with controversy. No single historical issue has sparked more debate—and disaffection—than the discrepancies between Joseph Smith’s book of Abraham and the scholarly translations of the scrolls. Purchased from Michael Chandler in 1835, the parchments were lost after Smith’s death and thought to have burned, but scraps of the original had made their way into the collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York City and were acquired by the Church in 1967. Latter-day Saints were shocked when the scholars who undertook a modern translation identified the scraps as parts of a commonplace Egyptian funerary text, nothing like the Abraham narrative that Joseph Smith translated and published in 1842.

Givens’s review of the response of Latter-day Saint scholars is the best single account of the controversy I know. He gives due weight to the apologists’ various explanations: (1) the scraps are not the text Smith worked from; (2) the translation may not correspond to the scrolls but miraculously contains bona fide Egyptian material; (3) or, as the Church’s website puts it, the scrolls were not literally translated, but “catalyzed a process whereby God gave to Joseph Smith a revelation about the life of Abraham” (180). After examining all sides of the question, Givens acknowledges that “in the case of the facsimiles [Smith] was apparently wrong, and in the case of the Book of Abraham narrative he may have been as well” (180). Believers may be forced back on the catalyst explanation of the translation. But for Givens, this is not a regrettable admission. The impasse on the question of historical authenticity is not the end of the road; it is rather the beginning of a much more productive inquiry into the nature of a seer’s mind. “Instead of evaluating Smith’s work by looking back through the lens of contemporary Egyptology, we may learn the workings of Smith’s prophetic imagination” (180).

Givens is fascinated by Smith’s conception of seership: his “voracious appetite to recover, reconstruct, and reconstitute lost worlds and celestial realms alike” (184). At the heart of the book is an explication of Smith’s grand cosmic narrative of God and his human children, “a mythological expansion that reached from premortality to human theosis” (271). This is the familiar “plan of salvation,” rooted in the books of Moses and Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price, beginning with the council in heaven and the war between Michael and Lucifer, extending to the Creation, earth life, family formation through temple sealings, and finally exaltation. In its totality, Givens argues, it is the masterwork of Smith’s seership.

Givens enjoys explicating grand themes, but he is also a close reader of manuscripts. The book of Moses grew out of Smith's larger project to revise the Bible. Givens astutely analyzes the myriad alterations in the King James Bible to point out the governing principles behind them. Smith was not haphazardly changing incidental phrases that struck him as in need of repair. He was reshaping a book to conform more fully to lost doctrinal truths.

Through close analysis, Givens also detects hints about Smith's method of revelation. How did inspired language take form in his mind? Similar elements in section 29 in the Doctrine and Covenants and Moses 1–6, received about the same time, offer clues. Phrases like “give me thine honor,” “foundation of the world,” and “agents unto themselves” turn up in both texts. The difference is that section 29 is “a pastiche of seemingly unrelated fragments” and abrupt digressions, “proceeding almost like a stream of consciousness,” while Moses is “a discretely packaged and polished cosmic narrative.” The two are “essentially the same revelation” but in “two distinct moments or phases” (91–92). “So a process that commenced in September 1830—with moments of insight, spontaneous glimpses of past worlds and events, fragmentary irruptions of God's voice, and inspired pronouncements—passes through a period of incubation during which Smith's prophetic imagination sorts out, synthesizes, and weaves the scattered fragments into the mythic narratives that constitute his most important revelatory texts” (93). These “workings of the prophetic imagination” appear in the book of Abraham as well. “These twin documents present us with the closest thing we have to a window into the process by which—at least in some prophetic moments—Smith transforms fragmentary glimpses across cosmic time into holistic, narrative theology” (93).

Givens's major achievement, in a book full of insight and illuminating research, is demonstrating how radically Smith's stories of eternity stood out against the traditional Christian culture from which they emerged. The simple sentence “worlds without number have I created,” for example, upended the idea of creation *ex nihilo*. Orthodox doctrine made Creation the beginning of all things—time, space, matter. In the traditional Christian account of Creation, there was nothing, and then God made everything. In the first chapter of Moses, God makes one world after another within an established universe. He is the author of worlds, not the totality of the universe. This meant that God was not the Creator in the traditional sense but “an organizer and artificer” (130).

Moreover, the God who weeps over his children's cruelty to each other in the writings of Enoch governs a universe that is not "fully conformable to his will and desires" (129). This amounted to a full "assault on the sovereignty of God" (129). He was neither the traditional Creator of the universe nor in complete control. Givens thinks that the Catholic Church was accurate in its official pronouncement that "the differences are so great that one cannot even consider that this [LDS] doctrine is a heresy which emerged out of a false understanding of the Christian doctrine. . . . The teaching of the Mormons has a completely different matrix" (129).

The book of Abraham trespassed the bounds of Christian orthodoxy even further with its depiction of a council of gods creating the earth—gods plural plus a council of creators, not a single supreme being. As Givens puts it, "Smith was not tinkering around the edges of Christian theology and ecclesiology. He was remaking Christianity from the bottom up" (124). His remade Christianity included "a covenant theology that put preexisting human souls alongside heavenly parents as members of a divine family" and a priesthood through which they were "fully incorporated into an eternal chain of belonging, with bonds both horizontal and vertical, equal parts anthropocentric and theocentric" (124).

Smith's radical departure from Christian norms is a source of pride to many Latter-day Saints. They will delight in this account of their prophet's originality and creativity, reinforcing Harold Bloom's view of Smith as a masterful religion-maker. Others may find the extremes unnerving. The everyday worship of Latter-days Saints today is much more conventional than the religion depicted in Givens's *The Pearl of Greatest Price*. We feel the attractions of reasonable religion: living at peace with our neighbors, enjoying family life, being of service, following Christ. Most Sunday School classes and sacrament meetings focus on faith, repentance, and listening to the Spirit. The Pearl doctrines remain in the background. For one thing, they are hard to work out in detail. At the edges, they blur off into confusion and the "mysteries." Some seem outlandish. Latter-day Saints are skittish about the claim that we each will have a planet of our own to manage. On the Church website, the Pearl doctrines are stated moderately and modestly (see "Creation" and "Premortality").¹

1. "Creation," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/creation?lang=eng>; "Premortality," The

But hesitant as some modern Latter-day Saints are to delve into these doctrines, the restraint does not erase the influence of Smith's grand narrative. These stories are immensely powerful. Once known, they are not forgotten. As an indelible part of Latter-day Saint culture, they irresistibly affect Latter-day Saint attitudes toward life. In exhibiting the splendor and the extravagance of Joseph Smith's Pearl doctrines, Givens reminds us how much they remain part of Latter-day Saint thinking. Modern belief may be a milder version of the original faith, but the radical elements persist, buried deep in the Church's spiritual DNA.

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Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/premortality?lang=eng>.

Make Yourself Gods:
Mormons and the Unfinished Business of American Secularism
By Peter Coviello

Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2019

Reviewed by Michael Hubbard MacKay

Borrowing its title from Joseph Smith's far-reaching Nauvoo theology, *Make Yourself Gods* is somehow even more provocative than its title. The average Latter-day Saint reader will chafe under its vocabulary, struggle through its detailed contributions to the study of secularism, and be at odds with its use of queer critique. Furthermore, to the average reader's disdain, this book will be chewed and discussed for a generation to come. It is not likely to be forgotten.

A brilliant literature professor and scholar of nineteenth-century secularism and queer theory, Peter Coviello published *Make Yourself Gods* with the University of Chicago Press in a series disconnected from Mormon studies and is determined to be a provocative and interdisciplinary scholar. He frames his approach as an outsider interested in using the biopolitics within nineteenth-century Mormonism as an ideal lens to view and articulate the complicated, debated, but essential idea of secularism. His book is framed within postsecular scholarship and offers a wholly important framework for queer theory¹ that builds a structure complementing the work of Eve Sedgwick, but ultimately this is a book about "secularism." He contends that the current literature liberalizes nineteenth-century Mormonism, secularizing it, whereas his examination of Latter-day Saint biopolitics places polygamy as the center of the Church's theology, in which the divinization of human flesh demands that the body is the object of enquiry. Though he orients himself by juxtaposing against Jan Shipps's methodological approach in her 1985 classic *Mormonism*, his voice is unlike any other from within

1. Queer theory is an approach that is at odds with the normative and dominant categories of sexuality and gender primarily used in literary and cultural studies, explicated in the work of Michel Foucault, Eve Sedgwick, Jasbir Puar, José Muñoz, and Rod Ferguson.

Mormon studies (save Jared Hickman)—challenging the positions of Paul Reeve, Samuel Brown, and, shockingly, even Richard Bushman.

Coviello is a brilliant writer, and he is very clear about what he is arguing and about what he wants to accomplish in his book. He makes three arguments that run throughout all six chapters that I will list here and discuss further below: (1) using queer theory to shape his argument, he contends that a history of the nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint body is a perfect example to demonstrate the contours of secularism; (2) nineteenth-century Mormonism's march toward the end of polygamy is a history of liberalization and secularization, while the current historical literature in Mormon studies feeds into a similar kind of secularization of Mormonism; (3) this argument also enables a helpful and important vocabulary for articulating secularism. Though Coviello works under the assumption that the reader has a sense for the chronological march of Latter-day Saint history through the nineteenth century, his chapters are organized thematically, beginning with a brilliant chapter on secularism, then moving to the divine body and polygamy, and finishing the first section by examining notions of the female body and the divine. This first section is placed as a theological orientation of the Mormon concept of the body developed before most Church members moved to Utah. Then he addresses imperialism, race, and indigenous peoples. He introduces here an idea he calls “hypernormativity” to mark a fascinating kind of liberalizing (25, 100). The final section uses the Latter-day Saint entanglement with homosexuality to summarize and further explain the biopolitics of secularism. With this brief summary, it's worth stepping backward to further explain his arguments.

First, *Make Yourselves Gods* explores the early Mormon concept of body (identifying normative and queer expressions of sex and gender, polygamy and homosexuality, race and godhood) with the scalpel of queer critique, the textbook of queer historiography, and the scholarly sophistication of queer theory. Coviello argues that Mormon history responds well to the “tools” of queer critique, primarily because of the aberrant practice of polygamy. Nineteenth-century normative intimacy opposes the sexual implications of polygamy, which are undeniably and deeply important to Mormonism since polygamy was not just liturgical or occasional but was essential to nineteenth-century Mormon theology, social engagement, community, identity, and sexual practice. Theologically, polygamy was an embodied daily reality of the expression of exaltation, or divinization. In fact, Coviello reads Joseph Smith as teaching that Latter-day Saints were living in divine bodies not yet enlarged; but as an expression of that reality, polygamy enabled them

and the patriarchs “to be Gods” (197). Queering² gender, in particular, Coviello demonstrates that even women held the potential to be gods through polygamy.

It is not that Coviello is simply creating a theological outline of states of the Mormon body but that the carnal body in polygamy and in pleasure is at the heart of the human drama. Furthermore, the same sensorial life continues on into the divine male and female body in the next life. Both blasphemously divine and humanly deviant, the Latter-day Saints are ripe for the picking of the queer theorist. They struggled for whiteness, they were the opposite of “right religion,” they were Mohammedan, and they created the counterbalance of the “normative” in the eyes of Americans, according to Coviello.

Make Yourselves Gods follows polygamy from its beginnings to its end in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Coviello sees Latter-day Saint polygamists as radicalizing race, authority, and an imperial kingdom of God within the secular state. The radicalization of sex, race, and gender within polygamous practices created political and social pressures that eventually moved them toward counterpossibilities and normalization. For Coviello, this direction and queer framing exposes the secular reality at work within nineteenth-century Mormon history. He writes, “What we discover . . . is a semivoluntary accommodation to the secular norms of liberal personhood, family, and erotic life, . . . a resonant queer story” (20).

Second, *Make Yourselves Gods* reveals the “liberalizing impulse of Mormon criticism” (7). It argues that Mormon studies literature is secularizing Mormonism. Coviello queers Mormon history, framing it against the normative secular liberal worldview, then tracks it like a bobsled down the normative track of secularism. Going from a polygamous to a devoutly monogamous institution creates the momentum, but what is shocking about his thesis is that (while it may have been on a different track) Latter-day Saint scholarly and apologetic literature creates the same kind of momentum down the path to secularism. It’s not that Latter-day Saint scholarship didn’t appropriately or accurately portray polygamy, racism, or Latter-day Saint hierarchy, it’s that they secularized it and misappraised it. Instead of evaluating the queer reality of polygamy, some of the scholarship challenged the violence of Missourians, especially focusing on the liberal secular sentiment of religious

2. “Queering” refers to a reading that challenges the binaries ingrained within heteronormative cultures, used here and below.

freedom. The strongest weapons of liberalism are raised in evaluation of Mormon history. Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints became victims in this secular analysis. Coviello argues that early Mormons are being rescued by those scholars who assume that Latter-day Saints are the embodiment of liberal personhood—liberally rational, democratic, charitable, nonviolent exemplifiers of modern secularism. The author writes that these scholars “reduce Mormonism . . . to ‘good religion’ by the lights of secularism” (21).

Coviello argues that this literature framed the Latter-day Saints as enlightened secularists, liberal in their devotions to the normative designs of antebellum America. The deviant, abnormal practice of polygamy was neither liberal nor absent from Mormonism. Coviello argues for Latter-day Saints to be a perfect example of the secular and how queer theory can highlight the secular by showing their determined theological refusal to cave to the secular, until the end of the century, of course. Latter-day Saint prophets spent time in jail, and many were willing to die for the cause of polygamy, theocracy, and other antiliberal sentiments. Coviello argues that the secularization of Mormonism was not only demonstrated by the abolition of nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy, but also that twenty-first-century writing and scholarship about polygamy was no vanguard, since it too pushed liberalism’s secular agenda.

Finally, *Make Yourself Gods* creates a brilliant structure and foundation around the current and classic literature on secularism to frame Coviello’s argument, not by demanding the difference between religion and nonreligion but instead by differentiating between “good religion” and “bad belief.” Secularism is not “nonreligion,” but secular religion inevitably shaped itself, socially and bodily, around liberal selfhood. Secularism is a liberalizing behemoth that categorizes faith in opposition to fundamentalism—or proper spirituality in opposition to the problem of zealotry. Because “secularism” has increasingly developed nuance upon nuance to become a field essential to multiple disciplines, Coviello hopes to create in *Make Yourself Gods* definitive axioms of “secularism” in the same way Eve Sedgwick did for queer theory. These axioms may end up being the most important part of his book in the long run. Here are my brief summaries.

The Seven Axioms:

1. “Secularism is not hostile to ‘religion’ as such” (25).

Charles Taylor’s *Secular Age* was correct in asserting that “secularism” is not a force or a social ordering that religion is opposed to. Secularism is also not the replacement of religion after religiosity

fades. Secularism marks the possibility of more live options that are not religion. Secularism also does not supersede, cancel, or replace religion. “Religion flourished in a secular age, and not as a holdover, residue, or unconverted outside” (27).

2. “Secularism’s negative, its enemy, is not religion; it is bad belief” (27).

Talal Asad was correct in arguing in *Formations of the Secular* that to understand the secular, one must grapple with the binary propagates that it creates (belief and knowledge; reason and imagination; history and fiction; the natural and the supernatural; the sacred and the profane). These binaries then propagate in what Nancy Bentley calls the “secularization two-step” (27), where a second-level binary is associated with the first-level binary (ennobling and harmful; civilizing and imbruting; tolerable and malign). For example, the first-level binary of religion and secularism moves to the second-level binary of tolerant and intolerant. Political liberalism does not distinguish between religion and non-religion but instead between religion and “bad belief.” Departure from liberal virtues creates bad religion.

3. “Secularism is a normative project: a discipline” (29).

Secularism is a discipline that gives a name to a specific way of structuring the world. This way of structuring the world developed historically through a variety of kinds of power that eventually “cohere in the political order of liberalism.” It is a discourse of power paired with the kind of liberalism that emerged with Western empires. This axiom is developed around the work of John Modern in *Secularism in Antebellum America*, which charts the emergence of “spirituality” across nineteenth-century America. “His work attunes us to secularism not as object but condition, not as enforceable proposition but as something instead networked, animated by a self-replicating systematicity” (32). It is a normative condition.

4. “Secularism has a body” (33).

Though secularism is a normative project, it still comes in multiple historical forms, different normative models, and varying political realities. With the innumerable possibilities of secular encounter, gender is the creator of the secular, but it is also very clearly created by the secular, for example. It is both generator and generated. Coviello provocatively explains: “The discourse of secularism conjugates what flesh it encounters” (38). Secularism,

in Foucauldian fashion, invents the “objects through and upon which they act” (39).

5. “Secularism is a Biopolitics” (39).

Imagining the embodiment of secularism is to understand secularism. The biopolitical is a kind of power invested into disciplining the body, fostering specific kinds of life and mass social phenomena. In this sense “secularism conjugates the flesh it encounters” and becomes something through which secularism is acted out, all the while the flesh is also being acted upon or shaped because of the performance. The disciplines of secularism are then aimed at things like the racialization of religion or the sexual normalization of a larger economy of life. One can imagine the individual body, as Kyla Schuller explains, working toward a way to “integrate the body [itself] into a system of economic productivity” (39); or the biopolitics that work to adjust population to economic process.

6. “‘Secularization’ is a not a fantasy—change in the conditions of belief is real—but the secularization thesis is a distorting, partisan way of telling the story of that change” (42).

The secularization thesis is dead. The idea associated with the secularization thesis, challenged by Jared Hickman and Coviello (among others working within postsecular critique), is triumphalist, though its inner concepts—the progressive movement of self-emancipation, enlightened skepticism, rationalization, and tolerance—are relevant ways of getting at the story of secularism. In *The Invention of World Religions*, Tomoko Masuzawa created a “singularity of Christianity” in the name of examining religions across the world. Hickman criticizes secularism as a “name for racialized Christian domination” (45).

7. “Secularization is a theodicy: the radicalized theodicy of hegemonic liberalism” (45).

Secularism is “orthodoxy in other clothes.” Secularism is “a normative sociality, an immanent frame . . . that allows us to know anything at all as ‘religious’ and to know the ‘secular’ as the thing that it is not” (52). Like the theodicy of Job, or of Islam, or of Christianity, the theodicy of hegemonic liberalism is secularism.

In conclusion, *Make Yourselves Gods* seems to claim that all potent academic lines of thought lead eventually to Salt Lake City and The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If Coviello had included a strain of thought about environmental studies, along with his analysis of religion, gender, race, politics, marriage, sexuality, and all things interesting, then he truly would have led all roads to Mormonism. All jokes aside, he has swung the door wide open for further research on queer theory and queer critique that could get to the heart of central tension within religion in general, but especially in Mormon studies: the concept of normativity. His book shouts resoundingly that Mormon studies is one of the most fascinating studies of religion in the history of the United States and can be used as an example to examine even the biggest ideas in the academy.

On the other hand, I assume that much of the attention Coviello will receive from Latter-day Saints will be dismissive. As you can already tell from this review, it is heavy laden with a steep vocabulary curve. His insistence that early Latter-day Saints were “queer” is likely to be misunderstood, and his direct critique of the current leadership will cause Latter-day Saints to react aggressively or dismissively. But like any gruesome “experiment,” historical or not, it’s hard not to look. In his final chapter, his critique draws your attention. He writes, “Think again of that humble originary scene: Louisa Beaman, standing before Joseph Nobel and beside Joseph Smith, on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River, disguised as a man. Such queernesses were as good as advertised” (216) since Joseph Smith apparently married Louisa that day as a polygamous wife.

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Documents, September 1839–January 1841

Vol. 7 of the Documents series of The Joseph Smith Papers,
edited by Matthew C. Godfrey, Spencer W. McBride,
Alex D. Smith, and Christopher James Blythe

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2018

Documents, February–November 1841

Vol. 8 of the Documents series of The Joseph Smith Papers,
edited by Brent M. Rogers, Mason K. Allred,
Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, and Brett D. Dowdle

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2019

Documents, December 1841–April 1842

Vol. 9 of the Documents series of The Joseph Smith Papers,
edited by Alex D. Smith, Christian K. Heimburger, and
Christopher James Blythe

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2019

Reviewed by Richard E. Bennett

Almost fifty years ago, my wife, Patricia, and I had the distinct privilege to work for incoming Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington in combing through the archives of the Church History Library in Salt Lake City for source materials long since shelved, considered lost, or otherwise off-limits. Along the way, we also enjoyed working with a team of other dedicated scholars brought in to work under Arrington's kind and learned tutorship. Among them was a talented archivist/historian named Dean Jessee, who was an assiduous student of the document, particularly the papers of the prophet Joseph Smith Jr. Owning a passion for the original manuscript and for letting primary sources speak for themselves, Jessee was less the interpreter and more the preserver. The publication of the multivolume Joseph Smith Papers a half century on owes much to the quiet, painstaking, and transformative work of this good man. They are a legacy to his vision, drive, and effort through years of ups and downs too many and sometimes too painful to discuss

here. They are also a tribute to the leadership of Elder Steven E. Snow, recent Church Historian and Recorder from 2012 to 2019, who did so much to see these latest volumes published.

Designed to replace Joseph Smith's long-favored, but now outdated, multivolume *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (HC), edited in large measure by B. H. Roberts almost one hundred years ago, the Joseph Smith Papers (JSP) do not presume to be a history of the Church and are most certainly not a biography of Joseph Smith. While they present faithfully and honestly the documents themselves, the interpretations of these manuscript materials are deliberately left up to the reader to make. Clearly, they are not meant to be the final word on the writing of Church history; rather, they are designed to facilitate and promote further research and much more careful understanding of what Joseph Smith said, wrote, believed, or received. Nevertheless, as the introduction to volume 7 argues, these documents are "critical to understanding Joseph Smith as a person" (7:xxxvi). As testament to the outstanding value of this work, no future study of Joseph Smith, his feelings, convictions, and doctrines or of the early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be done without rigorous use of the Joseph Smith Papers.

Following the finest contemporary standards of documentary editing employed in such similar on-going, multivolume publication enterprises as *The Papers of George Washington*, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, and *The Papers of James Madison*,¹ these three volumes—volumes 7–9 of the Documents series—cover Latter-day Saint history from the arrival of the Saints in Commerce, Illinois, in 1839 after their expulsion from Missouri until the end of April 1842—a period of three very eventful years. In large and very readable text and consistent formatting, they cover the formative period of settlement in what became "Nauvoo, the Beautiful." Featured are letters to and from the Prophet, his many sermons and revelations, minutes of meetings which he attended, sales and receipts, a wide range of legal papers, and a host of other papers. These three volumes speak of Smith's 1839 trip to Washington, D.C., in search of reparations from Congress for injustices brought upon the Saints in Missouri during the so-called "Mormon War"; the securing

1. David R. Hoth and others, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*, in various series (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998–); J. Jefferson Looney and others, eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, in various series (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004–); and David B. Mattern and others, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, in various series (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009–).

of the Nauvoo Charter; a wide range of land transactions with Horace H. Hotchkiss and other land owners; the establishment of the Nauvoo Relief Society and of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge; doctrinally rich sermons addressing such topics as baptisms for the dead, the Book of Abraham, and the nature of the Spirit; and early efforts at building the Nauvoo Temple and the Nauvoo House. Included also are reports on the successful rise of the Church elsewhere, especially in Great Britain, in large part owing to the immensely successful mission of the Twelve Apostles there from 1838 to 1841. Despite the many deaths brought on by “ague” or malaria as the Saints toiled to drain nearby swamps, it was a generally optimistic time when the Church was reconstituting itself with a new cast of characters, newly appointed leaders, and exciting new temple-based doctrines and ordinances for the salvation of both the living and the dead. With all its financial troubles, the Church was once again rearing another temple, more magnificent than the edifice it had constructed in Kirtland, and was looking confidently ahead until troubling issues, especially from within, began to cast a new and menacing shadow over its future prospects.

This work is so incredibly comprehensive that *context* is as much the message of the JSP as *content*. Unlike contemporary Bibles of the British Foreign Bible Society and of the American Bible Society that were being published “without note or comment,” Joseph Smith’s papers never stand alone. As with the earlier six volumes in this Documents series, volumes 7–9 feature an archival “Source Note” on the history, provenance, and physical condition of each document; a “Historical Introduction” providing for rich historical context; the document itself presented in its original format, complete with spelling and grammatical errors; and finally, numerous helpful footnote citations and explanations. In total, there are a staggering number of footnotes in all three volumes—6,610 to be precise! In the back of each volume are pages and pages of helpful appendices, chronologies, geographical and biographical directories, excellent maps, organizational charts, essays on sources, cross-sectional references to corresponding sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, acknowledgments, and, finally, a very fulsome index.

The definition of what constitutes “Papers” certainly influenced the size and scope of this work and begs discussion because the Joseph Smith Papers, in the strictest sense of the word, are often not Joseph Smith Jr.’s papers at all. While letters to and from the Prophet certainly fit this category, Wilford Woodruff’s journal entries and those of a score of other journal records of Smith’s sermons and discourses are accounts of what

others thought they heard Smith say. Furthermore, minutes of city council and Nauvoo Legion meetings, phrenology charts, and the entire Act to Incorporate the City of Nauvoo—presented here in its multipage entirety—can hardly be considered documents that Joseph Smith authored, owned, or received. Of the 129 documents in volume 7 alone, roughly 25 percent of them fall into this questionable category. For a work that seeks to authenticate exactly what Joseph Smith said or wrote, this expansive effort at including more rather than less demands a great deal of explanatory editing and might even perpetuate the kind of misunderstandings and misconceptions the JSP were designed to eliminate.

Nevertheless, I applaud the deliberate editorial decision to err on the side of including too much rather than too little. Following more closely the rationale used in *The Papers of James Madison* editorial project than those of either Washington's or Jefferson's, the editors include far more than merely the correspondence of Joseph Smith. Just as the Madison Papers editors decided to include such other things as proclamations, messages, addresses, and various memoranda based "on the extent to which they illuminated Madison's thoughts or his personal or official life," so too have the JSP editors expanded the parameters of what constitutes "Papers." Once again, I quote from the Madison Papers: "The degree of involvement he had with the document, either as recipient or sender, is of paramount concern," whether or not it is "of intrinsic interest in adding a new dimension to our understanding of the man, and in the case of a lengthy document, whether it has been previously published."² One can quibble at the scope and definition of what constitutes Smith's documents, but one must agree that in the final analysis it is the mind and soul of Joseph Smith that are being preserved here, not his papers in the strictest sense.

There is so much more to commend than to criticize in these volumes. Although compiled by three different teams of editors—which unfortunately did not include a single woman scholar—there is surprising consistency in tone, style, and content throughout the volumes. The *Papers* have also gone through three independent levels of text verification. If there are any spelling errors, I have yet to find them. The professional care taken by the content editors as well as many other copy editors toiling in the background to produce so handsome a final product is abundantly evident.

Likewise, the background legwork effort at tracking down the existence, authenticity, and whereabouts of the 330 documents in these three

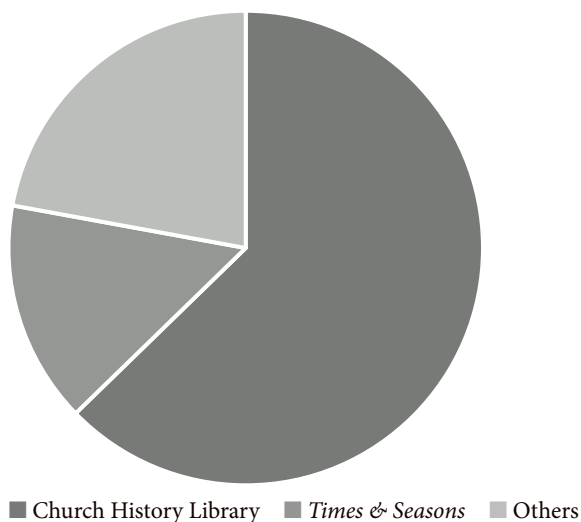
2. Mattern and others, *Papers of James Madison*, 8:xxx1.

Table One

Number/Provenance of Documents Found in Volumes 7-9

Repository	Volume 7	Volume 8	Volume 9
Church History Library	84	60	63
<i>Times and Seasons</i>	12	18	20
National Archives	7	0	0
Brigham Young University	5	7	7
Abraham Lincoln Pres. Library	1	3	2
Community of Christ	3	0	3
Huntington Library	1	2	0
Hancock County Courthouse	0	1	4
Library of Congress	3	0	0
Illinois State Archives	1	1	0
Chicago History Museum	1	1	0
Missouri Historical Museum	0	1	0
New York Public Library	0	1	0
University of Utah	1	0	0
Yale University (Beinecke)	1	0	0
University of Illinois-Urbana	0	0	1
Utah State Historical Society	0	0	1
Historical Society of Pa.	0	1	0
Iowa Historical Society	1	0	0
Privately Held	0	1	0

Table One in Pie Chart Format
Provenance of Documents



volumes is highly commendable. As per the accompanying chart, while almost 66 percent, or two-thirds, of the documents are to be found in the Church History Library in Salt Lake City, 123 of them are available only in the Nauvoo newspaper *Times and Seasons* and at eighteen other repositories all across the country. While some are copies of originals long since lost, approximately 80 percent are originals. This encyclopedic effort bore rich dividends, one being the surprising decision of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to transfer to the Church History Library various documents of Joseph Smith long held in its vaults—an official nod in favor of the project and a welcomed effort at transparency.

One highly beneficial collateral benefit stemming from the Joseph Smith Papers project is the inevitable discovery of documents referred to by Joseph Smith and many others that are no longer extant or available—what I am calling the “lost Joseph Smith Papers.” Many letters that Joseph wrote are not to be found anywhere today, and the same with several letters written to him. Regrettably, Smith seldom wrote out his sermons, and several of them were never recorded by anyone. However, the integrity of this work inevitably notes such omissions. So, too, where only copies of the originals remain, the editors are quick to note that fact.

And since the *Papers* are a veritable parade of personalities, another rich contribution of the detailed editorial process is learning much about the scores of men and women other than Joseph Smith who are referenced throughout. The letters to and from such individuals as Almon W. Babbitt, Orson Hyde, Horace H. Hotchkiss, John M. Bernhisel, Senator Richard Young, and a host of others reveal much about their intent and personality to even the most seasoned Church historian. For instance, I came away with a much fuller understanding—and appreciation—of John E. Page than I ever had before.

This effort to verify the authenticity of what Joseph Smith actually said or wrote is indispensable to understanding the character of the man and the policies, doctrines, and nature of the Church he established. Not only historians but also students of the doctrines of the Church, particularly of the unfolding ordinances of baptisms for the dead and of the temple endowment, will do well to consult these particular volumes.³ While

3. Occasionally the editors get carried away and make some very opinionated statements that could bear much greater scrutiny. For instance, when speaking of Smith's October 3–5, 1840, sermon on baptism for the dead, they suggest that he may have learned of it from reading Charles Buck's *Theological Dictionary*. They also state that

many of Joseph Smith’s revelations, let alone his sermons and addresses, were never canonized, what is found here is essential to understanding the “plan of salvation” as Joseph expounded upon it during these early Nauvoo years.

And as for understanding Joseph Smith himself better, the many documents on land sales and various financial transactions clearly show a prophet-leader dealing with extremely difficult business matters that eventually led him to declare bankruptcy in late 1842—a matter well documented herein. Involved in so many challenging matters and unwilling, if not unable, to delegate effectively, Smith was overwhelmed by the “temporalities” of directing a rapidly growing, increasingly complicated, multifaceted church enterprise. It is astounding that he had the strength and the time to address simultaneously the “spiritualities” of revealing new doctrines, temple ordinances, and other saving principles.

These many worthy positives notwithstanding, these volumes are not without their deficiencies or shortcomings. I return to the matter of inclusiveness. The Joseph Smith Papers project prides itself on being the repository of “all” of Smith’s papers, when in fact a great many items here are but representative samples of such things as declarations, receipts, pay orders, recommendations, and so forth. In the interest of space, not everything of Joseph Smith’s can or ought to be included, particularly of the mundane and baneful. However, it is not always made clear why one particular document is included and others are not. There also seems to be confusion over the inclusion of so many legal papers—such things as powers of attorney, bonds, licenses, promissory notes, and so forth—when a separate Joseph Smith Papers Legal volume is forthcoming that will highlight all such records. A more careful delineation of which documents should go into which volumes would save space and reduce redundancy. Fortunately, most of these materials are—or will be—found on the JSP website.

More to the point, completely lacking are any of the papers of Joseph Smith’s brother Hyrum, who as a member of the First Presidency from 1838 to 1841 and then as Associate President and Presiding Patriarch of the Church from 1840 to 1844 wrote much on behalf of both himself and his brother and who traveled extensively and often spoke in his brother’s behalf. Hyrum received much communication involving both himself and Joseph. It is surprising that while the editors bent over backwards to include so many papers not directly authored by the Prophet, they failed

Smith’s interest in the ancient prophet Enoch may have been spawned by Richard Laurence’s book on the same—both highly speculative and unsupported claims.

to include hardly any of those of his patriarch brother. This omission is most telling in these volumes during the discussions of the problems Joseph Smith was facing with Babbitt and his adamant refusal to close down Kirtland as an alternative settlement site to Nauvoo. Hyrum was very much acting on behalf of his brother during all these difficult times as well as being land agent for the Church back East. To omit drawing from his papers, when some of them so obviously represent his brother's directives and considerations, does a disservice to the project. By extension, one also wonders whether various papers of Joseph's other counselors, including Sidney Rigdon, and even of his wife Emma Smith should not have been included in what is otherwise a very expansive interpretation of what constitutes the "Papers" of Joseph. Until the Hyrum Smith Papers are published—hopefully to the same standard of excellence as those of his brother—students and scholars will have to go elsewhere to get a more complete picture of some of these difficult matters.

A second criticism is the stubborn insistence throughout to refrain from referencing some of the finest secondary literature on both historical and doctrinal topics significantly addressed in the documents. This was likely a conscious decision on the part of the editors, like those of the various presidential papers, not to highlight or to appear to favor the work of contemporary scholars and biographers, since the Papers project is fundamentally documentary in nature and not interpretive. Their rationale was as follows: "Secondary sources of sound scholarship are cited when they will distill several primary sources or provide useful general content" (7:xliv). However, the editing is inconsistent in this regard, citing only occasionally such scholars as Alex Baugh, Stephen LeSueur, Todd Compton, and Jill Derr but leaving off almost entirely the works of Ryan Tobler, Robert Flanders, and, most annoyingly, Glen Leonard, whose work *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* remains the most thorough work on the history of Nauvoo yet written. Furthermore, some of the finest and most current research with so much "useful general content" on the Nauvoo Charter, the Nauvoo Legion, and temple ordinances seems to be deliberately avoided. And how can there be references to the Missouri petitions for redress without drawing more upon the work Clark Johnson has so faithfully compiled in his study of the same?⁴

Which leads me to a third and more telling criticism—the tentative, somewhat fumbling, and incomplete effort at explaining Joseph

4. Clark V. Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2017).

Smith's involvement in plural marriage, particularly of the polyandrous variety. By the time volume 9 ends in late April 1842, Joseph Smith had married at least six other women, four of whom—Marinda Johnson Nancy Hyde; Sylvia Sessions Lyon; Lyon's mother, Patty Bartlett Sessions; and Presendia Huntington Buell—were already married to other men.⁵ To be sure, no contemporary document has apparently survived that speaks directly of such delicate matters, although to the editors' credit, volume 9 does include in the appendix an alleged letter of Joseph Smith to Sidney Rigdon's daughter, Nancy Rigdon, very likely concerning a proposition for marriage. The editors admit, "Although this letter's authenticity is contested, Joseph Smith both wrote and offered to write similar letters of explanation about the principle of plural marriage to other prospective spouses" (9:414). Clearly, there are enough references in various letters and sermons included herein that hint at the matter that even the editors felt compelled to address it. Even the chronologies at the end of each volume provide the dates of each of these marriages but do so without note or comment.

This is particularly frustrating and disappointing in the case of Marinda Hyde, whom Joseph Smith married likely in April 1842 while her husband, Orson Hyde, was serving a mission at Smith's request to Europe and Palestine. We are given here only a partial explanation and insufficient justification of a most difficult, somewhat perilous practice then developing. This is particularly perplexing when one considers how scrupulously careful the editors have been throughout these three volumes in explaining everything from language phraseologies, obscure individuals, scriptural references, difficult legal terms, mundane financial transactions, and a host of other satellite concerns. Buried in the biographical directory to volume 9, on page 459, the editors state that "plural wives of Joseph Smith and others are not listed here" and that "a list of Joseph Smith's plural wives will appear on the Joseph Smith Papers website," as if the names of these wives, some of whom are mentioned in the documents and all of whom are found in the chronologies, are not quite worthy of inclusion in the published volume or might generate unnecessary confusion or misunderstanding. I submit that this deficiency must be far better handled in later volumes to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the purpose and scope of the JSP, which so many have labored so long and hard to establish.

5. See Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Press, 1997).

To conclude, there will inevitably be later discoveries of additional Joseph Smith papers in the future, and as such become known, these volumes may well become out-of-date and incomplete. However, thanks to digital technology, the JSP website will inevitably include them in the years to come. I have no doubt that they will be described and authenticated in much the same excellent way the documents in these volumes have been handled in Dean Jessee-like fashion to preserve not just the Papers per se but the character and calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

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*Understanding Covenants and Communities:
Jews and Latter-day Saints in Dialogue*
Edited by Mark S. Diamond and Andrew C. Reed

Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University,
in cooperation with the Central Conference of Rabbis, 2020

Reviewed by Bradley J. Kramer

Organized topically, this book's sixteen essays provide a wealth of information about Jewish and Latter-day Saint perspectives, scripture, experience, worship, culture, and politics. However, at least for me, the true treasure of these essays is not so much informational as it is relational.

In my experience, interfaith meetings frequently bear an uncanny resemblance to middle-school dances: occasions where two groups very much want to get to know each other but have absolutely no idea how to do so. Consequently, they hang back, occasionally venturing forth to make awkward, momentary contact, only to quickly retreat to the safety of their respective camps afterwards. With this book, Jewish and Latter-day Saint scholars from Loyola Marymount University; Brigham Young University; Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles; and the Academy for Jewish Religion California attempt to remedy this situation not only by offering their readers several “good practices and lessons learned about successful interfaith dialogues” (xiv) but also by demonstrating in essay form what such a dialogue looks like and what it can lead to.

Where to Begin?

Even before their first meeting, participants in the Jewish–Latter-day Saint Academic Dialogue Project, as these scholars called their effort, recognized that interfaith dialogue, if it is to be productive and meaningful, must be conducted within a framework of a close relationship and that such a relationship can only be built over time. As a result, they stipulated that in order “to build sufficient friendship and trust,” they would start their discussions off small, with no more than six people from each faith group present, and that they would meet twice a year for the first two

or three years. Certainly, they would hold public sessions so that their efforts would have “broad impact,” but, as they saw it, the main work of this project would occur in small “closed-door, academic sessions” that would “preserve the ability of dialogue participants to express themselves openly” (5).

These scholars also agreed to start off cautiously and begin with discussions of “areas of commonality” before venturing into “areas of challenge and potential friction” (5). However, as two essays presented during their first meeting show, such caution does not mean that participants in these discussions should simply praise each other superficially or gloss over their differences. In “What Jews Can Learn from Latter-day Saints: Insights from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Jewish scholars Steven Windmueller and Mark S. Diamond inaugurate these discussions by reviewing “key features of the Church of Jesus Christ [that] have parallels in Jewish life and thought” (366), and although they generally refute any assumption of close similarity between these features, they set the tone for future discussions by suggesting how Jews can profit by adopting some aspects of Latter-day practice and adapting them for their own use.

In “Ancient Foundations of a Modern Religion: Latter-day Saints and the Hebrew Bible,” BYU professor Shon D. Hopkin continues along these same lines, by affirming that Latter-day Saints also have much to learn from Jews. As he points out, the emotional connection that many Latter-day Saints feel with Jews is often based on an “imagined” view of Jews that arises more from their own idiosyncratic reading of scripture than from actual experience. This underinformed “enthusiasm,” Hopkin readily admits, is a problem since it is often “mistrusted or found annoying or naively entertaining” by Jews. However, as he argues, it can also serve as a foundation for future dialogue that “must lead to more solid information” (32).

How to Continue?

Much as these two essays form a kind of introductory “mini-dialogue” which other interfaith groups can emulate, so other essays, presented in subsequent meetings, are paired in such a way as to highlight other elements of effective dialogue. For example, Hopkin’s “Latter-day Saint Liturgical Practice: The Psalms and the Day of Atonement” immediately follows Tamar Frankiel’s “Jewish Liturgy and the Religious Imagination.” In it, Hopkin not only links Latter-day Saint worship to the Mosaic

temple, much as Frankiel does with rabbinic worship, but he also demonstrates how and why one should sympathetically immerse oneself in another's faith experience. As he writes,

In Latter-day Saint worship services, an opening hymn is always sung, demarcating the movement into sacred time and space, a movement into a holier sphere. The second hymn, usually sung by the congregation prior to the ordinance of sacrament, then signifies an additional movement into an even holier space, a holy of holies in which Latter-day Saints seek to symbolically enter into the presence of God through the sacrament ordinance. The closing hymn demarcates the end of this sacred time and a movement back into more typical patterns of behavior and speech. (280)

Given the general antipathy to symbolic ritual felt by many Latter-day Saints, it is remarkable that Hopkin sees suggestions of one in the sequence of hymns present in what is often considered a "low church" meeting and that he views these suggestions positively. Not only does this essay show that Hopkin is hearing Frankiel's words, but it also demonstrates that he is internalizing her concepts and applying them to his own religious experience in ways that deepen that experience and enhance his understanding of it.

Similarly, Joshua D. Garroway's "A Jewish View of Paul" follows Thomas A. Wayment's "Latter-day Saint Engagement with Paul: Status Quaestionis," and Brent L. Top's "Guardian of Faith: The Sabbath in Latter-day Saint Theology, History, and Practice" follows Diamond's "Shabbat in Jewish Thought and Practice." In both of these pairings, each presented in subsequent meetings, a scholar from one faith reexamines a fundamental aspect of that faith and attempts to explain it in terms scholars from another can appreciate. The scholar from that other faith then responds and does so respectfully, thoughtfully, and honestly, often asking penetrating questions and providing fresh perspectives. In this way, these pairings, as well as others, demonstrate, in an almost step-by-step fashion, how deep and productive interfaith relationships are developed over time.

To What End?

Probably the most poignant example showing just what a well-developed interfaith relationship looks like is found in Garroway's essay "Supersessionism in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: A Jewish Response." As its title suggests, this essay is a reaction to an essay written

by LDS scholars Jared W. Ludlow, Andrew C. Reed, and Hopkin that reviews how Jews and Judaism have been presented, both good and bad, in the Book of Mormon, in the Doctrine and Covenants, and by Latter-day Saint Church leaders. This LDS essay is the longest essay in the book and was undoubtedly difficult for these scholars to write. Nonetheless, they persevered, convinced that “as Latter-day Saints and Jews engage with one another in honest dialogue, they must eventually encounter the hard parts of theological differences” (90).

And Garroway’s response, the shortest essay in the book, must have been difficult for him to write as well. Although he acknowledges that “the Latter-day Saint perspective of Jews appears less supersessionist” than other Christian faiths, he finds it “unnerving” that Latter-day Saint scripture does not deal with modern rabbinic Judaism and that Latter-day Saints seem to see Jews “one-dimensionally,” not as real people but as theological “avatars that stand in for the real Jewish people who either lived in the hoary past or will live again in an ideal future” (141).

Garroway’s irritation is palpable as he expresses a general Jewish wish to be seen by Christians much as Christians, he assumes, would wish to be seen by Jews—“as living, breathing people with the same sorts of struggles, fears, and aspirations as anyone else” (143). Nonetheless, despite these feelings of frustration, Garroway takes comfort in the relationships that he and the other participants in the Jewish–Latter-day Saint Academic Dialogue Project have formed. He ends his essay, “What has pleased me thus far about our Jewish–Latter-day Saint dialogues is my confidence that the participants on both sides aspire to exactly that sort of perspective when regarding one another” (143).

As I see it, this is the ultimate goal of interfaith dialogue—for participants to truly *see* each other and come together in a close, informed, mutually respectful, and mutually beneficial relationship—and I think this book represents a significant step forward in reaching that goal, especially for Latter-day Saints and Jews. Along these lines, I wish that the paired essays in this book were arranged more chronologically, according to the sequence described in Appendix 2, so that the development of this kind of a relationship would be more apparent. I also wish that more scholars from the other branches of Judaism, specifically the Conservative and Orthodox movements, could be involved.

However, in the end, my only major criticism of this book is that it is too short. Even after reading nearly 400 pages, I wanted more. I wanted discussions on the religious and cultural effects of a western pioneer heritage versus a more eastern immigrant experience. I wanted

comparisons between efforts to obey the Word of Wisdom and like-minded efforts to keep kosher. I wanted analyses of the differences between fast offerings and *tzedakah*, repentance and *t'shuvah*, conversion and *giyur*, seminary and *midrasha*. I even wanted studies of the similarities between doing temple work for distant ancestors and saying *kaddish* for deceased grandparents. Jews and Latter-days Saints have so much to discuss and so much to learn from each other. My only consolation is that this book is volume one of a series of volumes that promises to go on and on, and I, for one, am eager to read them all.

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The Annals of the Southern Mission: A Record of the History of the Settlement of Southern Utah, by James Godson Bleak, edited by Aaron McArthur and Reid L. Neilson (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2019)

Author James Godson Bleak (1829–1918) was a British convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and veteran of the Edward Martin hand-cart company. In the early 1860s, Bleak accepted President Brigham Young’s charge to be a clerk and historian for the Utah South Mission in St. George. *The Annals of the Southern Mission* is the result of decades of Bleak’s fulfillment of this commission.

Editors Aaron McArthur and Reid L. Neilson together systematically transcribed and verified over two thousand manuscript pages to bring Bleak’s work to the modern audience. Their purpose was largely to bring credit and recognition to Bleak’s long-lasting influence on Utah and Latter-day Saint historiography: “Without the contributions of obscure and underappreciated individuals like Bleak our understanding

of pioneer Utah would be poor indeed” (xxiv).

The book is organized overall by year and particularly by day, written in the same manner as a journal or diary. Some years span only a page while others many more. Bleak recorded the gamut of topics, including administrative records, such as tithing yields, priesthood ordinations, land distribution, and county and municipal affairs; notes or full transcriptions of discourses of local and general Church leaders; and progress reports of the St. George Temple, including construction milestones, expenditures, and a transcription of the dedication services.

Although much of the text is readable as a narrative, such as the discourse transcriptions and notes of major events, these segments are mixed among administrative records, which discourage casual reading. *Annals of the Southern Mission* will be of interest mainly to those investigating southern Utah and pioneer history. Like similar reference works, this book will be especially useful as a scholarly source.

—Alec Joseph Harding