

A SMALL STEP FORWARD

The Religious Studies Center (RSC) began under the direction of Jeffrey R. Holland, dean of Religious Education at BYU in 1975. Later in 1986, when he was BYU president, the *RSC Newsletter* was born. . . .

IN THAT FIRST ISSUE OF THE newsletter, President Holland stated, “When the Religious Studies Center was established, . . . it was intended to facilitate not only the University’s commitment to religious studies but was also to serve those same interests among the general membership of the LDS Church.” He added, “With the publication of this first issue of the newsletter, I wish to thank so many who have labored for so long to give us this base of scholarly and spiritual strength at Brigham Young University.” S. Kent Brown served as the first editor, and since then several other BYU professors have continued directing efforts to publish the newsletter, each leaving his unique imprint on it, including Charles D. Tate Jr., Kent P. Jackson, and Richard D. Draper.

Although the size remained the same since 1986, 8½ inches by 11 inches, the color, type font, and logo changed over the years. Despite these minor changes, it basically remained a vehicle to report on the activities of the RSC, including recent and upcoming conferences and symposia sponsored

by BYU Religious Education and the RSC. It also allowed us to inform readers of new RSC book releases. Finally, the newsletter always contained information on specific projects under way by members of the Religious Education faculty and often highlighted some small but significant insight to the study and research of our scriptures and our history. Some of these insights were real treasures for those who took the time to read the newsletter!

My professional association with the RSC began in 1997, when I coedited with Jeni Broberg Holzapfel *A Woman’s View: Helen Mar Whitney’s Reminiscences of Early Church History*. Since then I have coauthored or coedited four additional books with the RSC logo, gaining valuable experience from the good editorial work of Kent P. Jackson, who was responsible for the RSC publication office at the time, and the student editorial interns, who worked under his capable direction. All in all, they contributed in specific ways to make my publications stronger and better than they would have been otherwise.

In 2001 my relationship with the RSC changed from a reader and contributor to a team member when I was asked to become the editor of a new RSC publication, the *Religious Educator*. I moved my office from the Joseph Smith Building on campus to the Heber J. Grant Building, where the RSC publication office is located, to begin my efforts in getting this new venture on its way—now published three times each year. Here I became closely associated with the entire process of the RSC and the fine personnel who kept it moving: Richard D. Draper, who had replaced Kent P. Jackson as publications director; Charlotte A. Pollard, the administrative assistant; and the student editorial interns. Eventually, my duties at the RSC increased as I was asked to assume Dr. Draper’s position when he became associate dean in Religious Education in 2004. In those duties, I continued as editor of the *Religious Educator* but was now responsible for the triannual publication of the *RSC Newsletter* and the growing book production of the RSC, about ten to

In this inaugural issue you will see features that were the heart of the early RSC Newsletter, but you will also see some new sections to help you become more familiar with Religious Education.

twelve each year. We have added two full-time employees during those years of increased activity, an executive editor (R. Devan Jensen) and a production manager (Stephanie Wilson). Charlotte Pollard, who produced the newsletters from the beginning in 1986, retired in 2006, and we invited Joany Pinegar to join us that year as the RSC administrative assistant. We also continued mentoring students through our student editing intern program bringing some of the best and brightest students on board to assist us in our efforts to provide responsible and important research that highlights the great message of the Restoration. The RSC is a hive of activity, reflected not only in the increase of office space coming our way during the past few years but also in the publication of a growing number of books, along with accolades and awards for these efforts.

Last year as I reviewed the tremendous progress made at the RSC since it was founded in 1975, I thought about updating the newsletter to reflect this growth. Eventually, a proposal was sent to the Religious Education Administrative Council for their review and approval. We were soon given the green light, and immediately my office began working on a brand-new format for the newsletter that would allow us to increase

exposure to many more facets of Religious Education and of the RSC. In this inaugural issue you will see features that were the heart of the early *RSC Newsletter*, but you will also see some new sections to help you become more familiar with Religious Education and the people who make a difference in the classrooms on campus and in their research and writing activities that reaches audiences well beyond the walls of BYU.

We continue our efforts to fulfill Elder Holland's initial vision of what the RSC could be and what it could do for BYU and for the Church. We have not yet fully arrived at that place, but we have been making steady progress over the years. We see the rebirth of the *RSC Newsletter* in the form of *BYU Religious Education Review* as another step in getting there.

We hope you will enjoy not only the new format but also the additional content. Thank you for joining us on this new adventure. Enjoy! ✕



Richard Neitzel Holzapfel
Publications Director
Religious Studies Center

upcoming events

Open to the campus
community and general public*

FEBRUARY 2008

Friday, February 22

The 2008 Religious Education Student Symposium. In the Wilkinson Center on BYU campus from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. (Luncheon served to presenters from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.)

Wednesday, February 27, 2008

Missionary Preparation Fireside. In the Wilkinson Center ballroom on BYU campus at 7:30 p.m.

MARCH 2008

Saturday, March 22

"Come Unto Me": The 2008 BYU Easter Conference. In the Joseph Smith Building Auditorium on BYU campus from 9 a.m. until noon.

OCTOBER 2008

Friday, October 10, 2008

The 2008 Church History Symposium sponsored by Religious Education and the Religious Studies Center. Will be held on BYU campus. Topic is John Taylor.

Friday and Saturday, October 24–25, 2008

The 37th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium. Keynote address will be held Friday, October 24, in the Joseph Smith Building Auditorium on BYU campus. Topic is "The Doctrine and Covenants: Text, Context, and Modern Fulfillment."

***For more information,
please contact Stephanie
Wilson at 422-3293.**