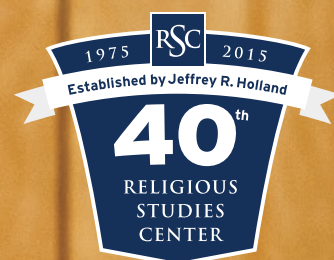


BYU RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FALL 2015

REVIEW

CALENDAR ✕ COMMENTS ✕ INTERVIEWS & SPOTLIGHTS ✕ STUDENT & TEACHER UPDATES ✕ BOOKS



The RSC at Forty

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, RSC Founder,
Helps Celebrate Fortieth Anniversary

Our Worldwide Mission



THIS YEAR IS THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY of the establishment of the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University. The RSC was founded by Jeffrey R. Holland, who was dean of Religious Education in 1975. At a recent fortieth-anniversary celebration event, Elder Holland remembered that the RSC was established primarily to be “a recognized center or identifiable focal point around which the faculty of Religious Education could pool their scholarship and be able to publish distinctly LDS research and writing.”

Since that modest beginning, the Religious Studies Center has published many important works, sponsored significant symposia and conferences, and in recent years established an important presence on the Internet, including social media and our YouTube video channel. The *Religious Educator* enhances gospel scholarship and promotes effective teaching. Selections of RSC publications are also translated and made available in Spanish and Portuguese. The direct influence of the Religious Studies Center—measured by Internet hits, publication purchases,

and subscriptions, as well as numerous comments received—is being felt worldwide.

“A lot has changed in those forty years,” Elder Holland observed, “but some things haven’t—including the need for orthodox scholarship that both illuminates and defends the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.” As the reach of the RSC continues to grow in future years—as our works increase in quality and draw the attention of the academic world—we must remember, as Elder Holland admonished, that the work of the RSC must help belief flourish and must defend the Church throughout the world. That is our mission. That is what we intend to do.

The Religious Studies Center intends to raise the bar—to do more, to do it better, and to extend our influence for good to a wider audience worldwide. To achieve that mission, we will continue to need your support. To use the words of Emma Smith uttered at the establishment of the Relief Society, the Religious Studies Center is “going to do something extraordinary. . . . We expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.” As dean of Religious Education and director of the Religious Studies Center, I invite you to assist us—by written words or consecrated means—“to do something extraordinary” and to meet those “pressing calls” in the next forty years. ❧

Brent L. Top
Dean, Religious Education

BYU

Religious Education

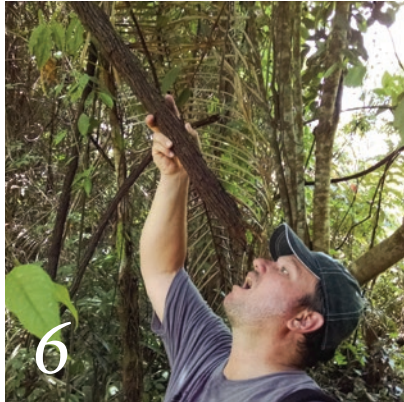
REVIEW

BYU Religious Education Review
A Publication of the Religious Studies Center

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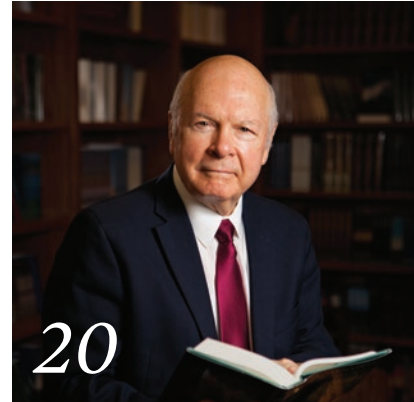
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Cover photo: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland at RSC fortieth-anniversary event. Photo by Richard B. Crookston.

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CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS

AS WE CONTINUE TO REFLECT on the past forty years of the RSC's existence and look forward to another forty years, we at the RSC thought it appropriate to provide you with a glimpse of some of the outreach work that is currently under way by faculty in the Church History and Doctrine and Ancient Scripture Departments. The RSC has been extremely successful due in large part to the excellent directors and staff we've had over the years. All of them have contributed in meaningful ways in shaping the RSC. In our next forty years, as we assess and weigh our goals, we plan to engage the question of an increasingly diverse LDS membership. In this issue of the *Review*, you will see some of the superb efforts at outreach that have been supported by the RSC. To name just two of our efforts, we specifically call your attention to the newly created Office of Religious Outreach (Robert L. Millet) and the conference we sponsored on the Buddhist canon (Gregory E. Wilkinson). We plan to continue publishing important and timely research with respect to the global church and to encourage and foster academic study of this important topic.



Gregory E. Wilkinson, Andrew C. Reed, Robert L. Millet, Richard G. Moore, and J. B. Haws at a meeting of the Office of Religious Outreach. Photo by Richard B. Crookston.

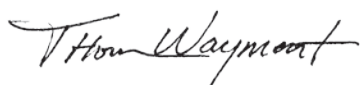
At the heart of this issue of the *Review* is a report on the RSC's fortieth anniversary celebration. This year we had the opportunity to sit down with Elder Holland and discuss his thoughts at the time he established the RSC. Many of the ideas that he shared with us are presented in the article on the legacy of the RSC. We at the RSC feel tasked with continuing

our long history of providing excellent peer-reviewed resources on Church history, doctrine, scripture, and related topics. We hope in our next forty years to reach beyond Provo and to engage in meaningful discussion with the larger academic community on topics of interest to the growth of the Church. We would especially like to thank our readers

and our generous donors who have made the center what it is today.

Finally, in this issue of the *Review* we welcome two new faculty members to the Department of Church History and Doctrine as well as call your attention to some of the award-winning publications by faculty in religion. As part of our efforts to reach out to the community, we will begin sending out a monthly e-Newsletter that details upcoming conferences and symposia, that reports on recently published and forthcoming publications, and that shares updates on the research of RSC authors. To receive our e-Newsletter, please contact joan_pinegar@byu.edu with the subject line "RSC e-Newsletter."

Thank you for supporting the RSC! ✕



Thomas A. Waymont
Publications Director
Religious Studies Center

upcoming events

Open to the campus community and the general public

OCTOBER 2015

Friday and Saturday, October 21–24, 2015

SIDNEY B. SPERRY SYMPOSIUM

The 44th Annual BYU Sperry Symposium will start in the Joseph Smith Building (JSB) auditorium on BYU campus. The title of this year's symposium is "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder." Presentations will cover the Book of Mormon's translation, witnesses, and printing, as well as its role in restoring doctrinal truths.

FEBRUARY 2016

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Friday, February 19, 2016

This event is held in the Wilkinson Student Center (WSC) from 9:00 to noon. The annual student symposium provides a forum for students to research, write, and present papers about religious subjects from a faithful perspective. For more information, visit <http://rsc.byu.edu/studentsymposium>.

MARCH 2016

2016 CHURCH HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

Thursday and Friday, March 3–4, 2016

The 2016 theme is "Beyond Biography: Sources in Context for Mormon Women's History." Scholars of Mormon women's history have long demonstrated a commitment to and an interest in biography. The resulting narratives have helped to recover and preserve voices that would have otherwise been lost to modern awareness.

These events are free of charge, and registration is not required. Some event details are subject to change. For more details, please visit us online at rsc.byu.edu/conferences or contact Brent Nordgren at 801-422-3293.



Faculty Highlight: Andrew C. Reed

ANDREW C. REED (andrew_reed@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BYU.



ANDY REED IS A RUSSIAN HISTORIAN who studies relations between Jews and Christians. He is currently working on a monograph on the history of ritual murder charges against Jews and the public debates about Jews and Judaism within nineteenth-century Russia. He is also writing a history of Orson Hyde and his interest in and work on the Jewish Question in mid-nineteenth-century Europe. He holds a PhD from Arizona State University, a

master's degree from Cambridge in the study of Jewish-Christian relations, and a master's degree in Slavic linguistics. You can often find him on the golf course enjoying a long walk, or waterskiing whenever possible. On the weekends he cheers for Boise State and Arizona State. He is married to Kaylyn, and they have five children: Riley (thirteen), Bentley (eleven), Kelsie (nine), Bradley (seven), and Josie (five). ❧

Faculty Highlight: Gerrit J. Dirkmaat

GERRIT J. DIRKMAAT (gerrit_dirkmaat@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BYU.



GERRIT J. DIRKMAAT RECEIVED HIS PhD FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF Colorado in 2010, where he studied nineteenth-century American expansionism and foreign relations. His dissertation was titled “Enemies Foreign and Domestic: US Relations with Mormons in the US Empire in North America, 1844–1854.” He worked as a historian and writer for the Church History Department from 2010 to 2014 with the Joseph Smith Papers Project and served as a volume coeditor/historian for *Documents, Volume 1*, the lead volume editor on *Documents, Volume 3*, and continues to work as an editor for the Joseph Smith Papers project on *Administrative, Volume 1: The Council of Fifty Minutes* and *Documents, Volume 8*. Prior to his work at the Church History Department, he served as the senior assistant editor of *Diplomatic History* from 2003 to 2009. He currently serves on the Church history editorial board for *BYU Studies Quarterly* and on the editorial board of the journal *Mormon Historical Studies*. He is the coauthor, along with Michael Hubbard MacKay, of *From Darkness Unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*, published in 2015 by Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University and Deseret Book. He and his wife, Angela, have four children. ❧

Faculty Spotlight: W. Justin Dyer

W. JUSTIN DYER (justindyer@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BYU.



W. JUSTIN DYER RECEIVED HIS PHD IN HUMAN AND COMMUNITY development from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, after which he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Auburn University. Since then he has taught courses on family processes and statistical methodology in the BYU School of Family Life. He joined the Religious Education faculty this fall and is teaching the Eternal Family course (Religion C 200). His research area includes fatherhood with a particular emphasis on fathers in stressful circumstances, such as fathers of children with disabilities and incarcerated fathers. He has also conducted research on adolescents, examining how family processes influence their development. ❧

Faculty Highlight: Robert C. Freeman

ROBERT C. FREEMAN (robert_freeman@byu.edu) IS ASSISTANT DEAN OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT BYU.



WITH BOB'S UNDERGRADUATE degree being in geology (BYU, 1985) and a terminal degree in law (Western State University, 1989), most wouldn't have predicted a career in Religious Education at BYU. The first dozen years of Bob's career were spent with Seminaries and Institutes in Southern California and Arizona. Eventually thoughts of BYU surfaced, and in 1996 the Freemans relocated to Provo. The shift to research was not easy but was worth it. Bob's research centers primarily on the Saints at War Project, which he has directed for about fifteen years and which has

resulted in half a dozen books as well as several documentaries and exhibits, and an archive of several thousand veteran accounts, now housed in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at BYU. Besides research, Bob's other great love is to be in the classroom with students. As Bob approaches the twenty-year mark in his service to the university, he feels pure gratitude for the faculty, staff, and students in Religious Education, which have enriched his and his family's lives over the years. In addition, the Freemans have seven children and are BYU fans through and through! ❧



THE MYTHIC AND MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF PLANTS AMONG THE MOPAN MAYA OF BELIZE

MARK ALAN WRIGHT AND KERRY HULL

MARK ALAN WRIGHT (mark_wright@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE AT BYU.
KERRY HULL (Kerry_hull@byu.edu) IS A PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE AT BYU.

IN LATE JULY AND EARLY AUGUST OF 2014, DR. KERRY Hull and I braved the sweltering heat of the Central American rainforest to collect ethnobotanical data among the Mopan Maya of Belize. We lived and worked in the small village of San José in the foothills of the Maya Mountains, a community that has maintained a traditional household reliance on the forest for food, health, and medicinal purposes for countless generations. For those unfamiliar with the discipline, ethnobotany is the study of the traditional knowledge and customs of a people concerning plants and the ways plants are used for medical, religious, and other purposes.

In Mopan culture, hundreds of plants are recognized as having an effect on one's strength and well-being—often due to the nutritive qualities of the plants, but sometimes due to deeply rooted mythological or cultural conceptions. The belief that plants have supernatural health-promoting properties beyond their actual nutritional content may seem almost superstitious to some modern Latter-day Saints, but the Nephites may have been expressing similar beliefs when they extolled “the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots *which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases*, to which men were subject by the nature of the climate” (Alma 46:40; emphasis added).

To determine which plants the Mopan Maya use and how they use them, each morning we walked with



Photos courtesy of Mark Alan Wright and Kerry Hull.

a different agriculturalist to their fields, often a distance of several miles through steep and rugged rainforest. We would pause frequently along the way to ask them the names and uses of the different plants we encountered and take detailed photographs and notes. Upon arriving at the fields they owned, they would provide meticulous details about each of their cultivated crops as we criss-crossed their maize fields and cacao orchards. Although we worked with several different consultants over the course of our fieldwork, there was remarkable consistency regarding the names, uses, and method of preparation for the roughly 250 plants we documented. In the early afternoon we would return to the village and sit with consultants and systematically work our way through

detailed photographs from previously published botanical field guides specific to the region, to refine the identifications of the plants we had encountered with them throughout the day. We used the final hours of daylight to compile our notes before retiring to our thatched-roof hut, which had neither electricity nor running water (but plenty of creepy-crawly things).

For the Mopan Maya of San José, a person's good health is maintained by regulating the consumption of "hot" and "cold" foodstuffs. The terms "hot" and "cold," however, do not refer to the actual temperature or even spiciness of what they ingest. Rather, those terms are in reference to the mythical qualities of the substance and the effects it will have on the body. Determining a person's health relative to their proper modulation of "hot" and "cold" typically requires the expertise of a traditional healer, known as *aj-ilmaj* in Mopan, from the verb *ilmaj* "to cure." The root *-il* means "to see" or "perceive," which is aptly named, for Mopan healers are said to be able to perceive imbalances in a patient's blood through specific acts of divination.

THE BREADTH OF WHAT WE DOCUMENTED WILL ALLOW US TO PRODUCE SEVERAL FOCUSED BUT UNIQUE PUBLICATIONS.

They believe the blood that animates the human body is a sacred substance that must be kept in proper balance in order to optimize one's health. Their healers carefully choose plants with the appropriate "hot" or "cold" characteristics to treat different types of illness in the blood. The "hot/cold" imbalance that may be affecting a person could also be due to sorcery, which is still practiced widely in the region. The "bush doctors" (as they are called by the Mopan in English) are also usually sorcerers themselves (also called *pulya'aj*), which enables them to detect the presence of a curse on the patient and prescribe the appropriate type of plant, food, or drink to counteract the curse based on the "readings" they take from their blood.

One example of a plant that is highly regarded for its "blood-building" properties is the Balsam pear (also

known as bitter melon), which they believe also has powerful antiseptic or cleansing qualities. Its name in Mopan Mayan is *(ix)-jamoor*, and someone with "weak" blood will turn it into a tonic and drink it daily to "build the blood," but they believe it simultaneously "purifies" the blood. They consider it to be especially useful in treating fevers as well as diabetes. Interestingly, some recent clinical studies actually lend credence to the Balsam pear's usefulness in treating diabetes, as well as demonstrating its effectiveness as an antibacterial and antiviral agent.

A number of trees are also valued for their ability to "build blood." The semi-deciduous *b'uk'ut* tree—also known as Stinking Toe—is popular among the Mopan as a means of strengthening the body. The long, wood-like capsules contain upwards of forty seeds per pod. Mopan men and children suck on the seeds in order to "build blood," meaning they believe it increases their strength and stamina. As it happens, Stinking Toe seeds actually are rich in iron, giving logic to its usage as a treatment for anemia because it would increase red blood cell counts and legitimately help to build one's strength.

Our field season was extremely fruitful (as it were) and produced a wealth of ethnobotanical and linguistic data. Although the initial mining of our data has focused on the general concept of building blood, the breadth of what we documented will allow us to produce several focused but unique publications. For example, we also catalogued intriguing gender-specific ethnomedicinal properties that the Mopan ascribe to certain plants, as well as fascinating beliefs that entwine the actions of specific animals with specific plants (often with regards to sorcery) that have not been previously documented. We are grateful for the generous support of the Religious Studies Center, which awarded us a grant to carry out this research project. ❧

If you'd like to make a special gift to Religious Education, please contact Ed Snow at 801-422-9047 or email ed_snow@byu.edu.



From Tabernacle to Temple

By RICHARD O. COWAN

RICHARD O. COWAN (richard_cowan@byu.edu) IS A PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE, BYU.

UTAH VALLEY SAINTS WERE devastated when fire destroyed their beloved Provo Tabernacle in December 2010, but they were elated by the announcement the following October that it would be rebuilt as a temple. Richard Cowan was already working on a history of the Provo Utah Temple, so he expanded his project to include the new Provo City Center Temple. The Religious Studies Center just published *Provo's Two Temples*. Much of the material in this article is drawn from that work.

Early Story of the Tabernacle

Construction on the Provo Tabernacle commenced in 1883. It was designed by William H. Folsom, who had worked on a number of important projects including the Salt Lake Tabernacle and Manti Temple. The Provo Tabernacle's architecture was Eastlake or late Victorian, noted for many colors and a variety of design details. There would hardly be a plain surface in the building's interior, even including designs on the ceiling. The tabernacle's upper windows and corner towers also reflected Gothic revival architecture, which was popular during the late nineteenth century.

The new tabernacle was the largest house of worship in Utah Valley at the time. It measured 152 by 86 feet, and the central octagonal



Provo Tabernacle as seen from the east. Photo by John Livingstone.

For nearly a century and a quarter, the Provo Tabernacle continued to occupy a key place in the lives of the Latter-day Saints and others in Utah Valley. An event in 2010, however, would alter the building's future forever.

tower reached 147 feet above ground level. Each corner tower contained a spiral stairway connecting the balcony to an outside exit completely separate from the main floor entrances. Architect Folsom "claims that this portion of the plan was revealed to him in a vision."¹

Because of the antipolygamy "raid" of the 1880s, five general conferences convened at locations away from Salt Lake City, two of them—April 1886 and April 1887—in the still-uncompleted tabernacle at Provo. Construction accelerated to accommodate the anticipated large crowds as best as possible.

After years of struggle and setbacks and at a cost of \$100,000 (about \$2.8 million in today's money), the tabernacle was finally completed. On April 16, 1898, over four thousand men and women gathered for the two-day event. Poor health prevented President Wilford Woodruff from attending the dedication (he would die just a few months later in San Francisco), but his counselor, George Q. Cannon, offered the dedicatory prayer.

A popular feature of the new building was its promenade atop the central tower's square base nearly seventy feet above the ground. It afforded "a grand view of Utah Lake and the surrounding country." Due to structural deficiencies and winters of heavy snow, however, the central tower began to cause the roof to sag. Therefore, it and the promenade walk were removed in 1917. At this time, stained glass replaced the semi-frosted glass in the windows, perhaps to help compensate for the loss of the tower.

The Provo Tabernacle provided the setting for civic meetings. Probably the most notable political figure to speak there was US president William Howard Taft, who came in 1909. It also hosted a variety of cultural activities. Well-known performers included violinist Fritz Kreisler, and the Minneapolis Symphony. The concert of the famed pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff was briefly interrupted by the rumbling of an interurban train, whose tracks passed just behind the tabernacle. Playing one of his own concertos with "much gusto," he suddenly stopped, "held both hands in midair" until the

noisy train had passed, "then crashed down on the next note and continued his performance."²

Brigham Young University graduations convened there until 1941, when the Joseph Smith Building was constructed. Since that time, various BYU colleges have held their convocations at the tabernacle. Over the years, stake conferences were the most common meetings held there. Thus, for nearly a century and a quarter, the Provo Tabernacle continued to occupy a key place in the lives of the Latter-day Saints and others in Utah Valley. An event in 2010, however, would alter the building's future forever.

The Refiner's Fire

A special holiday season presentation was scheduled for the tabernacle in December of that year. On Thursday evening, December 16, a large cast assembled in the tabernacle for the dress rehearsal of *Gloria*, by noted Latter-day Saint composer Lex de Azevedo, to be presented there the following two evenings. The group included an orchestra, a choir, and additional outstanding soloists recruited from various parts of the country. Large arches on the stand were flanked by Christmas trees with twinkling lights. Producer Kim Egginton remembered, "It had the feel of old Jerusalem, with the modern-day Christmas. Just gorgeous. It really felt celestial."

Just after 2:30 the following morning, a security guard at the neighboring Nu Skin facility reported to the tabernacle's watchman that he saw what appeared to be steam or smoke coming from the building's roof. The

tabernacle guard immediately entered the building to investigate. He saw fire burning in two places—one on the center of the stage near the piano, and the other around the edges of a hole that had burned through the ceiling. At 2:43 he called the fire department. Because the firemen were returning from a call in the area, they arrived at the tabernacle just over one minute later. When they entered the building, they could see that the fire had progressed further up into the choir area. When they observed burning debris falling from the ceiling, the decision was made to fight the fire only from the outside.

LeGrand "Buddy" Richards—president of the Provo South Stake, within whose boundaries the tabernacle was located—received a phone call notifying him of the fire. He recalled: "When I arrived at the scene my worst fears were confirmed; smoke was pouring out of every opening. . . . I stood in horror as the flames broke through the roof and when I saw flames appearing over the precious organ. I decided I could not watch any longer and returned to my home, devastated by what I had witnessed."³

At about 6:00 a.m., the entire roof came down with a thundering roar. At this point, fire filled the entire interior of the building.

In addition to the building itself, other losses were substantial. They included one of the finest pipe organs in the western United States plus numerous musical instruments, costumes, and hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of video equipment brought in for the *Gloria* production. Another treasure that was lost was an original painting by Minerva



Courtesy of A4gpa. Photo edited.

Teichert depicting Peter, James, and John bestowing the Melchizedek Priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Fire marshal Lynn Schofield later set the total loss at 15 million dollars.⁴

John Emery, of Jacobsen Construction in Salt Lake City, was sent to Provo Friday morning while the building was still engulfed in flames. His assignment was to stabilize the walls and to give attention to possibly preserving any parts of the building. Church officials needed to know if it would be physically possible to save the tabernacle. Like so many others, Roger Jackson of FFKR Architects was shocked by news of the fire. He contacted the Church officials with whom he had been working and urged them not to allow the building to be torn down. Although the flames had gutted the

wooden interior, the brick walls had remained sound. Both of these men would play key roles in building the Provo City Center Temple, Jackson as architect and Emery as Jacobsen Construction's project manager.

Andy Kirby became the Church's managing director of the project in Provo. He and Emily Utt, Historical Sites curator, spent endless hours on cold winter days sifting through the tabernacle's remains. "We wanted to look through every inch of debris," Utt recalled. They found a wide variety of items including newel posts, pieces of railing or wooden molding, hardware from doors, hundreds of nails, and much more. In some cases, the fire had actually uncovered features that had been hidden for decades. It burned away later layers of paint or remodeling to reveal original colors of paint or

designs of wallpaper. "My favorite discovery," Utt concluded, was some original stenciling that had been hidden behind two temporary walls, some mechanical equipment, and four layers of wallpaper—all burned away by the fire. The investigators took photographs and had architects prepare careful drawings of these items that would provide keys to an understanding of the building's original architecture and character.

A Surprising Announcement

As the fall 2011 general conference approached, many in Provo hoped the Church might announce something about the tabernacle. In his opening remarks, President Thomas S. Monson announced plans for several new temples. "First, may I mention that no Church-built facility is more important than a temple," the



Photo by Brent R. Nordgren.

prophet emphasized. “Temples are places where relationships are sealed together to last through the eternities. We are grateful for all the many temples across the world and for the blessing they are in the lives of our members.” Then he continued, “Late last year the Provo Tabernacle in Utah County was seriously damaged by a terrible fire. This wonderful building, much beloved by generations of Latter-day Saints, was left with only the exterior walls standing. After careful study, we have decided to rebuild it with full preservation and restoration of the exterior, to become the second temple of the Church in the city of Provo. The existing Provo Temple is one of the busiest in the Church, and a second temple there will accommodate the increasing numbers of faithful Church members who are

The investigators took photographs and had architects prepare careful drawings of these items that would provide keys to an understanding of the building’s original architecture and character.

attending the temple from Provo and the surrounding communities.”⁵

Groundbreaking and Reconstruction

On Saturday morning, May 12, 2012, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve and two other General Authorities came to conduct groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Provo City Center Temple. Elder Holland described an estimated 5,600 faithful Saints crowding the grounds as a “stunning sight.” He believed

that there had never been, nor would there ever be again, so many people gathered on this property at once, truly making history. This was a “remarkable moment,” he concluded.⁶ Elder Cecil O. Samuelson, Emeritus General Authority and president of Brigham Young University, insisted that a “BYU education is really not complete nor has it reached its heaven-intended potential unless it is joined with a consistent pattern of temple worship and service.”⁷

“The existing Provo Temple is one of the busiest in the Church, and a second temple there will accommodate the increasing numbers of faithful Church members who are attending the temple from Provo and the surrounding communities.” —President Thomas S. Monson

Church leaders had instructed that as much as possible of the original tabernacle’s remaining structure should be saved.⁸ In August 2012 the octagonal conical roofs of the corner turrets were removed and stored off to one side for possible use in the coming reconstruction.

Plans called for temple facilities to occupy two levels beneath the historic tabernacle. Determining how to excavate for this basement while preserving the original brick walls posed a significant challenge. Conversations among the Church’s project manager, architect, contractor, and others developed ideas of how to accomplish this. The inner two layers of brick were removed and then replaced with concrete six to ten inches thick, heavily reinforced by steel rebar. This was completed by the end of October 2012. The result was a reinforced concrete structure with a brick veneer.

The next step was to sink piles ninety feet into the ground and then shift the weight of the structure, an estimated 6.8 million pounds, from its historic foundation to the system of piles. This process was completed just before Christmas. Excavation for the temple’s basement then took place during the opening weeks of 2013. As the earth was carefully removed from around the piles, the tabernacle walls

appeared to be gradually lifted up in the air, standing on tall stilts, but they actually had remained in their original position. This unique process attracted worldwide attention and evidenced how the Church honored the pioneer builders by preserving as much of their work as possible.

The temple’s foundation, over five feet thick from top to bottom, was put into place during the early spring. As soon as this mat footing had dried, the process of erecting the two-foot-thick basement walls started. They were built between the inside and outside sets of piles, directly under the tabernacle’s brick walls. By August the original walls rested on this new foundation, so the piles could be removed.

Most of the weight of the temple’s floors and interior walls would be supported by a network of steel beams constructed inside the existing brick shell. On the morning of August 20, 2013, the first of these beams was put into place. This steel network was completed during the fall. The metal components of the 35-foot central spire were assembled on the ground north of the tabernacle, and a large overhead crane lifted this whole assembly into place on December 5, 2013, a cold but sunny winter day. Workmen celebrated this as the “topping out” of the steel

framework. When the last of the four turret roofs was put into place the following month, the building had the basic form of the future Provo City Center Temple.

On March 31, 2014, the statue of the angel Moroni was lifted through the air to the top of the tower promptly at the appointed time of 2:30. Applause erupted from the crowd of about one thousand eager onlookers. Some sang “An Angel from on High” or “I Love to See the Temple.” With the angel in place, the former tabernacle now truly looked like a temple.

Stained-glass windows, a beloved feature of the tabernacle, became an important part of the new temple. Their style was described as “Americanized Victorian,” featuring abstract or stylized designs. The Gothic arch of the second-story windows was repeated many times in the temple’s interior.

Grounds of the Provo City Center Temple occupy the majority of two city blocks. In addition to the temple, there were to be two other structures. One was a mechanical building measuring twenty by sixty feet. The other was a pavilion located in the gardens south of the temple. Patterned after a Victorian garden gazebo, this octagonal structure was about forty feet wide. It was provided



Photo by Matisse Hales.

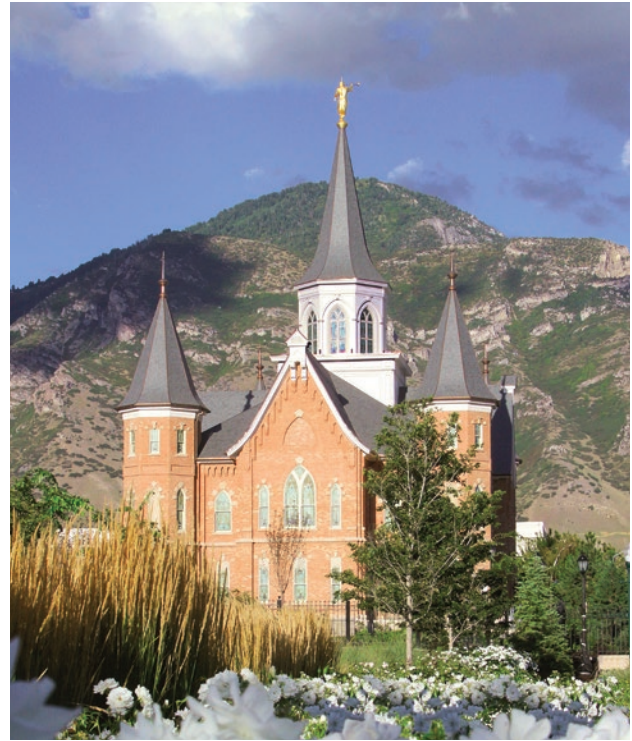


Photo by Brent Nordgren.

primarily for the convenience of groups waiting for wedding parties to emerge from the temple. The Victorian fountain, constructed in the south garden between the temple and the pavilion, was positioned so that motorists approaching the temple on 100 South would see the beautiful fountain directly in front of them.

Open House and Dedication

In July 2015, Steven J. Lund, executive chairman of Nu Skin Enterprises and a former Area Seventy, was appointed to direct the open house and dedication. Richard Cowan would head the subcommittee responsible for history. During that same month, Allen C. Ostergar Jr., who had presided over two stakes, a mission, and MTCs worldwide, was called to become the Provo

City Center Temple's first president. During the fall, finishing touches were completed on the temple's interior and grounds so that all would be ready for its open house and dedication. Anticipating great interest in this reconstruction of a historic and beloved building, a period longer than usual was scheduled for the open house. Dedication of the Provo City Center Temple was set for Sunday, March 20, 2016. ❧

Endnotes

- 1 *Salt Lake Herald*, as quoted in *The Territorial Enquirer*, April 6, 1886.
- 2 N. La Verl Christensen, *Provo's Two Tabernacles and the People Who Built Them* (Provo, UT: Provo Utah East Stake, 1983), 147.
- 3 A. LeGrand Richards, "For the Temple of God Is Holy, Which Temple Ye Are," remarks written December 8, 2011, to be given at

stake conference December 11, 2011, 1–2; typescript in possession of Richard Cowan.

- 4 Jim Dalrymple, "Officials Put Final Damage to Landmark at \$15 Million," *Daily Herald*, April 1, 2011, A1.
- 5 Thomas S. Monson, "As We Meet Again," *Ensign*, November 2011, 4–5.
- 6 Sarah Jane Weaver, "'Out of Ashes' Ground Broken for Provo City Center Temple: Church to Build Temple in Shell of Provo Tabernacle," *Church News*, May 20, 2012, 3–4.
- 7 Weaver, "'Out of Ashes,'" 4.
- 8 Most of the material in this chapter is based on personal observations of the authors as well as repeated conversations with the contractor, John Emery; the site manager, James Bruce Hansen; and the construction missionaries, Jay and Silvia Newitt. Many details of chronology are confirmed by *newtempleinProvo.blogspot.com*, by Julie Cannon Markham.

Elder Holland Helps Celebrate RSC's Fortieth, Looks to Future

Thomas A. Wayment, Devan Jensen,
and Brent R. Nordgren

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The Religious Studies Center (RSC) began forty years ago under the direction of Jeffrey R. Holland, then dean of Religious Education at BYU. So it was fitting to have Elder Holland help celebrate the RSC's fortieth anniversary, speaking at the Hinckley Center on BYU campus on May 14. Elder Holland was joined by a large group of prominent dignitaries, authors, and Religious Education faculty.

In his remarks, Elder Holland reminisced, "At one point in my life I thought my entire professional career would be with you doing things just like this: working side-by-side in the classroom on this campus and pursuing wonderful projects such as those of the Religious Study Center. The Lord stepped in to exercise damage control in that regard and has pretty much barred me from the classroom for the last thirty years or so, but I still consider myself a teacher, an advocate for Religious Education, and for the faith-promoting work of the Religious Studies Center."

So why did he establish the RSC, and what does he think of it today?

Need for a Publishing Center

In 1974, when Holland was appointed dean of Religious Education, he noticed a kind of hodgepodge of research efforts that hindered productivity. He recalled, "When I came to the dean's post I was rather immediately concerned that there was not a recognized center or identifiable focal point around which the faculty of Religious Education could pool their scholarship and be able to publish distinctly LDS research and writing. Publishing was being encouraged more and more throughout the university, but among the Religious Education faculty it was still a little newer and sometimes threatening idea. There was a fair amount of feeling that publishing is what other people did at the university and what we did in the Joseph Smith Building was teach."

He remembered how, at the time, “no one was more of a defender of great teaching than I was, but I believed then and I believe now that great teaching had to be informed by great learning.”

He added: “I simply realized we have a lot of important things to say by very able people—men and women. But we did not have a lot of opportunities to publish LDS-oriented scholarship. We had the Church magazines, but often the chance to publish there was by invitation and on assigned topics. It wouldn’t necessarily have been somebody’s area of interest or research. So we had very limited ways to let out what I thought was an increasingly wonderful and professional profound faculty right, and teach through the printed word and through the publication and get beyond the classroom—go beyond the university.”¹

Creating a research and publishing center would expand that outreach. “We needed a place—a center, if you wish—for our faculty to write and share their teaching with an ever-widening audience of students, alumni, and Latter-day Saints generally. So we combined those two elements: an organizational principle, a home for several existing entities, and a place to write and publish good, orthodox studies that would matter to us in Religious Education at BYU.”²

But, more important, he saw a way to facilitate the academic needs of the growing worldwide Church. By late 1975, Dean Holland pitched the idea of the Religious Studies Center to BYU president Dallin H. Oaks and the board of trustees. Within weeks, the RSC was born.

Elder Oaks wanted to help celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the RSC but was unable to attend. He did, however, convey a message that was shared with the audience by the current dean of Religious Education, Brent L. Top: “I send to you, and through you to your associates, my congratulations on the notable accomplishments of the Religious Studies Center. I do so with deep appreciation for your many publications and accomplishments in enriching Brigham Young University and the work of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

The RSC Then and Now

This new organization became a place where quality research on religious topics could be published and made available to an anxious—perhaps even hungry—Latter-day

Global Research

Part of the variety in publications over the years is simply a reflection of the changing interests of academic researchers and, in part, a broad understanding of what were perceived to be subjects that warranted further interest. Looking forward, it is clear that the RSC can continue to loosely follow the trends of LDS academics, and in the future will continue to see studies that reflect wide-ranging interests and specialties. Most recently, three trends seem to be emerging, namely the interest in (1) publishing document-driven studies that help broaden our understanding of the growth of the Church into the modern era, (2) more specialized regional histories as we try to establish accurate and carefully written histories of the Church in areas across the globe, and (3) carefully written books and articles that engage current academic discussions that are of interest to the LDS community.



Opposite and above: by Savanna Sorensen, courtesy of BYU Photo.
Below and page 18: by Richard B. Crookston.



Elder Holland didn't anticipate how the RSC would develop, but he's grateful "it has taken on the maturity and the dimension that it now has."

Saint audience. Elder Holland remembers, "We made our launch by publishing *Nibley on the Timely and Timeless* and held the first of what would become an annual symposium. Since that modest beginning, so many significant publications have been sponsored, encouraged, facilitated, and published by the Religious Studies Center. I am genuinely impressed as I hold here the bibliography of at least some of the work that has been done."³

The RSC started as a center to promote and encourage academic research primarily associated with the faculty of Religious Education. Over time the RSC expanded that original objective to include sponsoring research of academics who share similar interests with those of Religious Education.

Elder Holland didn't anticipate how the RSC would develop, but he's grateful "it has taken on the maturity and the dimension that it now has." He said, "It is very gratifying that it's forty years old, which is really quite amazing when you think of that. And often, I think the Lord does things with us and through us that we are not aware of at the time. The scripture says, 'Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great' (Doctrine and Covenants 64:33). I think you are doing that with the RSC. I think it was a small thing—in a way, almost an incidental thing when we started—but out of small things proceedeth that which is great."⁴

Over the years, the staff of the RSC has grown from having a faculty publications director dedicating limited resources to identifying and supporting new research to having a full-time administrative assistant/publications coordinator (Joany Pinegar), a full-time editor (Devan Jensen), and a full-time production manager (Brent Nordgren).

The RSC employs several student employees who help with all aspects of everything with which the

Significant Mileposts

1980s Beginning in the 1980s, the RSC began publishing books that expressed a strong LDS interest and that were written almost exclusively to a Latter-day Saint audience. In the 1990s, RSC books often reflected growing interest in the Book of Mormon and the ancient world. The RSC also published a series of studies on the Book of Mormon, as well as a number of other important titles on doctrinal and historical themes.

2000 At the turn of the century, the RSC began publishing the *Religious Educator*, an academic journal with a focus on the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, Latter-day Saint scriptures, and Latter-day Saint history. It was first intended to provide gospel teachers with carefully prepared, inspirational, and informative articles that would help assist them in their teaching roles. It has evolved to benefit a much broader range of Latter-day Saints who love the gospel and its teachings.

2008 In 2008, the RSC website was launched, providing free and easy access to thousands of published articles and recorded conferences to a continuously growing global audience.

Also in 2008, the *BYU Religious Education Review* magazine was launched and made available to all full-time faculty at BYU and a growing number of interested subscribers at no charge.

2009 Starting in 2009, the RSC and Deseret Book established a copublishing arrangement that would help RSC books reach a much broader audience and help fill an academic niche for Deseret Book in the area of LDS scholarship.

Awards

- **1981:** MHA's Distinction in Editing Mormon Documents for *The Words of Joseph Smith*
- **1993:** MHA's T. Edgar Lyon Award of Excellence for "Discipleship: Brigham Young and Joseph Smith," in *Joseph Smith, the Prophet, the Man*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr.
- **2006:** MHA's Steven F. Christensen Best Documentary Award for *The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Utah Years, 1871–1886*
- **2009:** MHA's Geraldine McBride Woodward Award for Best Publication in International Mormon History for *A Land of Promise and Prophecy: Elder A. Theodore Tuttle in South America, 1960–1965*
- **2010:** MHA's Geraldine McBride Woodward Award for Best Publication in International Mormon History for *In Harm's Way: East German Latter-day Saints in World War II*
- **2012:** Harvey B. Black and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (Ancient Scripture) for *No Weapon Shall Prosper: New Light on Sensitive Issues*
- **2013:** MHA's Best International Article Award for "The Role of Local Missionaries in Nineteenth-Century England," in *Go Ye into All the World*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and Fred E. Woods
- **2013:** Harvey B. Black and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (Church History and Doctrine) for *Civil War Saints*
- **2014:** Harvey B. Black and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (Ancient Scripture) for *By Our Rites of Worship: Latter-day Saint Ritual in Scripture, History, and Practice*
- **2015:** Harvey B. Black and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (Church History and Doctrine, Gospel Scholarship) for *Nauvoo and Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources*

Religious Studies Center is involved. When Elder Holland learned of the positive impact on students, he said, "I am thrilled to see student efforts, student essays, and student products. I would not have been conscious enough at the time to see that would be one of the great things that the RSC would grow into. I am happy that it has. Again, I think that testifies to the vitality of a good idea. If something is good, suddenly it starts to bless more here and bless more there. If you plant a little seed and it grows up into a pretty healthy tree, I guess a lot of people can get under it and enjoy the shade in three or four or five directions."⁵

"Out of Small Things . . ."

"I think we are just beginning," he added. "I think we are just barely sprouting out of the ground. . . . I think we are all going to need our faith fortified, and one way we fortify it is by solid study. So I think for people to have opportunities, avenues, ways, channels, places to study and fortify their faith, to learn the wonders and beauties and marvels of the Restoration—I think you have just barely started on that, and so I would hope the RSC becomes much more widely known."⁶

Website & RSC App

Today, thousands of articles are available for free through the website, rsc.byu.edu, and the RSC app. Articles are mostly in English, but much research is translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

"The Real Heartbeat of Intellectual Life"

Gathering for the fortieth-anniversary celebration raised at least two important questions: "What can we do better?" and "How will we change and grow in the future?" Regarding the first, Elder Holland said, "I am thrilled with the products I see; I get a copy of most things that are published. I am very proud of that, and like it all very much. But I think we will want to keep asking hard questions: how much is practical, how much is needed, how many lines of communication do we need, and what books are good enough to carry our imprimatur. When we know which products those are, then we should do a world-class job with them."⁷



Conferences & Symposia

The RSC has sponsored and hosted numerous conferences and symposia throughout its forty years. Most of these are held annually. Some of the more notable ones include:

- Book of Mormon Symposium
- Sidney B. Sperry Symposium
- BYU Church History Symposium
- BYU Religious Education Student Symposium
- BYU Easter Conference
- King James Bible and the Restoration Symposium

Research Arm of Religious Education

Two faculty members in Religious Education also facilitate the allocation of grant money to sponsor research, and more recently the RSC has created an outreach office with the intent to foster religious understanding.

At any given time, the RSC funds in part the research of a dozen or more academics, and the research topics covered is exceptionally broad. Currently, the RSC is funding research into Ethno-ornithology in Lacandon Maya culture, translations of papyri from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, study of sixteenth-century English Bible translations, Jews in Russia, and research into the establishment of Fayette, New York, as a pilgrimage site for Latter-day Saints.

These efforts are made possible through the help of generous donors.

“I bless you that ideas will continue to come, that the truth will always shine, that the projects will take form, [and] that the Spirit will lead you to insights and discoveries.”

Regarding the second, he urged, “I would hope the quality of our product is unassailable, as definitive, as rewarding, as inspiring as a wonderful, bright set of faculty members and contributors can make. So I think what will happen is we will do a lot more of this, it will go not only to members, but it will bless Latter-day Saints, and it will bless those who are not of our faith. If we are going to be that kind of a voice for the Religious Education faculty within the university, then for a portion of the university itself, then for the Church, it will just have to be world-class work. . . . That is the journey we are on.”⁸

He said, “I would like this to become known as *the* scholarly voice of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on matters that would normally be considered as ‘religious studies.’ When people think, ‘Where do I look to see the real heartbeat of intellectual life and academic contribution for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,’ I want them to think BYU, and at BYU when the issue is religious scholarship, I want them to think of the Religious Studies Center.”⁹

Touching Hearts and Minds

At the conclusion of the fortieth-anniversary celebration, Elder Holland praised the fact “that as an RSC team, you are trying to touch all those centers of response, including the mind, as something of the final challenge and the concluding summit. Fortunately, we among the presiding council of the Church feel we do have your heart and soul and strength and mind, and we thank you and heaven for them.”

He concluded with a stirring testimony and “an apostolic blessing on every man and woman and student who contributes to the great on-rolling of the kingdom, particularly here tonight at BYU, and particularly here tonight

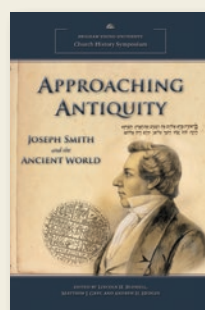
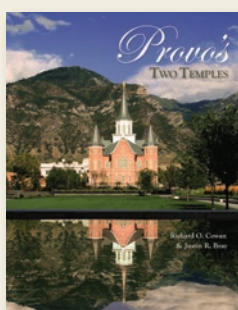
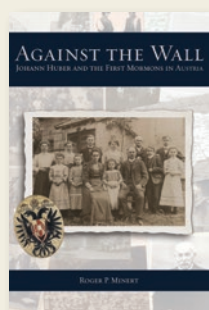
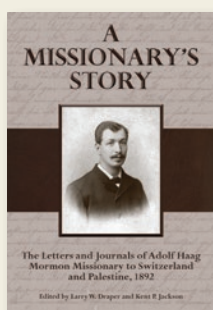
through Religious Education and the Religious Studies Center.” He said, “I bless you that ideas will continue to come, that the truth will always shine, that the projects will take form, that the Spirit will lead you to insights and discoveries, and that your voice will be articulate and powerful, first in the classroom, and later, perhaps, as you form those words on the printed page, that the very angels of heaven will be on your right and left and will protect your hearts and your homes.”¹⁰

This is the journey the RSC is on, and we hope you will join with us. ☒

Notes

- 1 Transcript of RSC Fortieth Anniversary, May 14, 2015.
- 2 “The RSC Turns Forty: A Conversation with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland,” interview by Thomas A. Wayment, *Religious Educator* 16, no. 2 (2015): 1–2.
- 3 Transcript of RSC Fortieth Anniversary, May 14, 2015.
- 4 “The RSC Turns Forty,” 6–7.
- 5 “The RSC Turns Forty,” 5.
- 6 “The RSC Turns Forty,” 4–5.
- 7 “The RSC Turns Forty,” 3.
- 8 “The RSC Turns Forty,” 5.
- 9 “The RSC Turns Forty,” 3.
- 10 Transcript of RSC Fortieth Anniversary, May 14, 2015.

Year at a Glance: 2015



- *Zion's Trumpet: 1854 Welsh Mormon Periodical*
- *Our Savior's Love: Hope & Healing in Christ* (BYU Easter Conference)
- *Psalms of Nauvoo: Early Mormon Poetry*
- *An Eye of Faith: Essays in Honor of Richard O. Cowan*
- *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*
- *Conversations with Mormon Historians*
- *Against the Wall: Johann Huber and the First Mormons in Austria*
- *Rediscovering the Sites of the Restoration: The 1888 Travel Writings of Mormon Historian Andrew Jensen, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black*
- *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (44th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium)
- *A Missionary's Story: The Letters and Journals of Adolf Haag, Mormon Missionary to Switzerland and Palestine*
- *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*
- *Provo's Two Temples*
- *2015 BYU Religious Education Student Symposium*
- *The Restored Gospel and Applied Christianity, 2015*
- *BYU Religious Education Review* (Winter and Fall)
- *Religious Educator* (Winter, Summer, and Fall)
- *Studia Antiqua* (Spring and Fall)

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: THE WORK OF THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS OUTREACH

Interview with Robert L. Millet

ROBERT L. MILLET (*robert_millet@byu.edu*) IS COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS OUTREACH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT BYU.

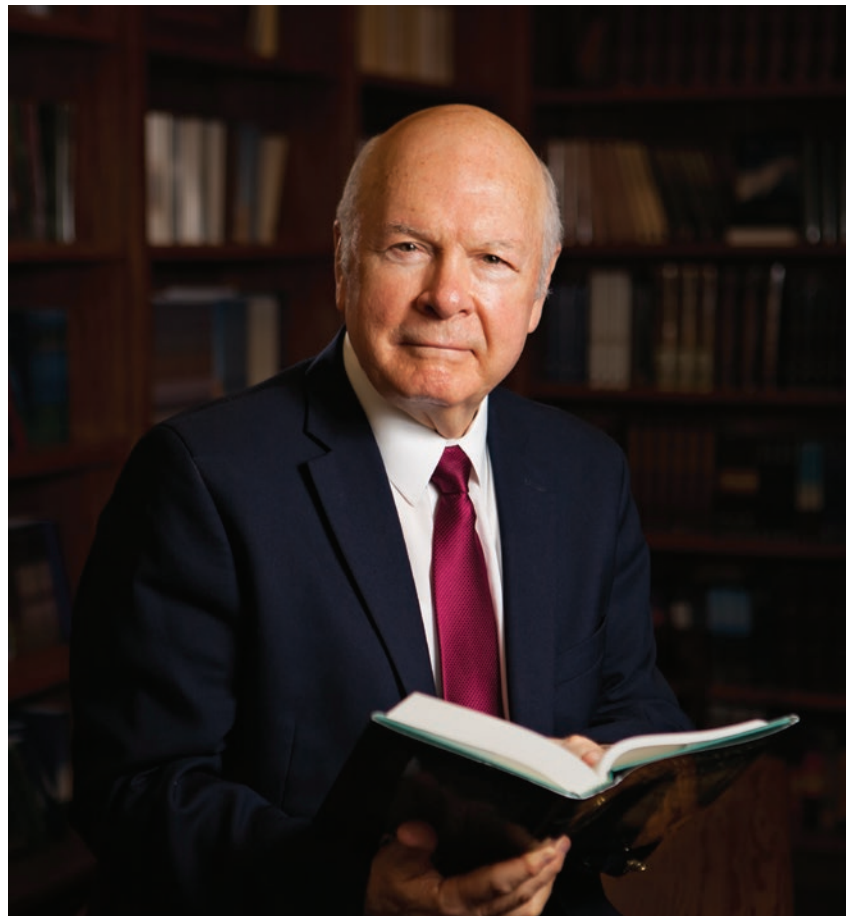
MEMBERS OF THE RELIGIOUS Education faculty have been involved in interfaith activities of various kinds for many years. Truman G. Madsen was the first holder of the Richard L. Evans Chair of Christian Understanding, which chair he occupied for two decades. Other members of the faculty have occupied that chair and worked to bridge the gulf between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other religions, both Christian and non-Christian. Following his retirement from teaching at Brigham Young University in January of 2014, Robert L. Millet was asked by Dean Brent L. Top to coordinate the work of interfaith relations in Religious Education for the next two and a half years. Brother Millet agreed to respond to questions relative to his assignment and the work of outreach.

Q: What exactly is the Office of Religious Outreach?

A: We have been reaching out for a long time, but to some extent such outreach has been rather hit-or-miss, seasonal, a kind of “management by crisis.” Dean Top felt the need to organize and strategize, to prioritize

and orchestrate our efforts through establishing the Office of Religious Outreach. I have been asked to work closely with a committee of outstanding faculty members who already have a good bit of experience and background in making friends for

the University and the Church and working closely and cordially with men and women of other faiths. This committee consists of Andrew C. Reed (Church history and doctrine), J. Spencer Fluhman (history), Shon D. Hopkin (ancient scripture), Alonzo L.



Robert L. Millet. Photo by Richard B. Crookston.

Gaskill (Church history and doctrine), Mauro Properzi (Church history and doctrine), Richard Moore (retired from Seminaries and Institutes), Gregory E. Wilkinson (Church history and doctrine), Keith J. Wilson (ancient scripture), and J. B. Haws (Church history and doctrine).

Q: What does the committee do?

A: We meet monthly to discuss such matters as these: (1) What are the hot topics and newsworthy events in the religious world? (2) Who are the key people addressing those topics? (3) What are the articles and books with which we ought to be familiar across the religious spectrum? (4) Who are the people that we need to know better, those we need to meet on their turf, those who should be invited to visit BYU and Salt Lake City? (5) What are the topics deserving of interfaith academic conferences or workshops at BYU? (6) With which religious traditions should we begin a formal academic dialogue? (7) What conferences or lectures being held throughout the country should we try to have representatives attend and report on?

Q: How is the Office of Religious Outreach associated with University Hosting and Church Public Affairs?

A: We try to work cooperatively with these two entities. An example would be the prominent religious leaders we have hosted in Salt Lake City and in Provo during the last eighteen months—Francis Cardinal George (at the time, archbishop of Chicago), Richard Land (Southern Baptist Convention), Albert Mohler

(president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville), George Wood (president of the Assemblies of God), Ravi Zacharias (respected Christian apologist), Ella Simmons (vice-president of the Seventh-day Adventists), and many other scholars and church representatives. Several of these folks had an opportunity to meet with Church leaders in Salt Lake and then to spend time with members of the Religious Education faculty and to deliver addresses to the BYU students. These visits were all coordinated on the campus through the Office of Religious Outreach, working closely with university officials and Church Public Affairs.

Q: This seems like an exciting endeavor but one that could be costly to maintain. How do you do it financially?

A: We have been blessed to have the full support and encouragement of Religious Education. We are also involved at present in a fund-raising effort to establish an endowment of three to four million dollars so that we can have in place an ongoing, self-replenishing, operating fund. We want to be in a position to attend to every appropriate opportunity to share the message of the restored gospel and build bridges of understanding and friendship within the United States and beyond. Those wishing to contribute to this enterprise can donate to BYU Religious Education and earmark the funds for the Office of Religious Outreach. We have already had a great deal of interest and support expressed by several individuals who are in a position to

assist financially in this work, but we are in need of many more helpers.

Q: Why is this work so important to you?

A: My thirty years of teaching and writing at BYU were a sweet and treasured privilege; I consider it an honor to have been able to teach some of the finest young people in the world. And yet I hasten to add that the opportunity to be involved in interfaith activity for the last twenty years—to read and explore the faith and beliefs and practices of other religious traditions, and to be involved in thousands of hours of painstaking but elevating and inspiring religious dialogue with some of the finest church colleagues and scholars in the country—has been deeply rewarding, unexpectedly edifying, and soul-expanding. I look upon and feel toward my brothers and sisters of other religious persuasions with a kinship and a love that has changed my life. At the same time, these encounters have deepened my conviction of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ; I am a much more devoted Latter-day Saint because of these stretching associations. And, lest this point go unmade, I am also persuaded that all of this outreach has opened doors of understanding for the university and the Church and led honest-hearted men and women to see us with new eyes. In that sense, it has, in a small way perhaps, helped to bring the Church out of obscurity and out of darkness. Great strides have been taken in the past, but we rejoice in coming to discover what the Lord may yet bring to pass. ❧

Q&A

The Chinese Buddhist Canon and Comparative Religion: A Conversation with Greg Wilkinson

Interview by Leah Welker

GREG WILKINSON (gregory_wilkinson@byu.edu) IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND DOCTRINE AT BYU.

LEAH WELKER (leahwelker@outlook.com) IS A SENIOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT BYU.

On April 9–10, 2015, Brigham Young University hosted the Third International Conference on the Chinese Buddhist Canon. One of the main organizers of the conference was Greg Wilkinson, assistant professor of Church History and Doctrine at BYU, who partnered with Jiang Wu from the University of Arizona. The conference was supported by various entities within BYU, including the Religious Studies Center, the Kennedy Center, the Richard L. Evans Chair, the Colleges of Humanities and Family, Home, and Social Sciences, and the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages.



Photos courtesy of Greg Wilkinson.

Q: To start out, do you want to describe the primary purpose of the conference?

A: In 2011, we had the first-ever dedicated conference toward the Buddhist canon, especially the Chinese Buddhist canon, and its evolution, formation, and social

issues. We've gone through three different conferences, and they've moved forward in almost a historical fashion. In the first conference, we looked at more manuscript editions, more early formations of the Buddhist canon. And then we went to more print editions, looking at the

way the Buddhist canon was used in early modern times. Then in this last conference we tried to focus most heavily on the Buddhist canon in the modern age, looking at the way the Buddhist canon has been both created or recreated, interpreted, evolved, and used.

Maybe if I hadn't come to BYU, this conference may not have been held here, but it just seemed to be the right fit. And all the people that came to the conference were absolutely delighted with the selection of location. I don't think there was anybody who came to the conference, as far as participants, that saw any sort of inconsistency or saw BYU as being an illogical choice. They all thought it was a great setting for the conference. I think everybody that comes to BYU is in some way impressed by what they encounter, both in the individuals and in the natural environment of BYU. Many people left saying, "We should do this every year here." In that way, it was a great success.

Q: What sparked your original interest in Buddhism and comparative religion?

A: I went on a mission to Tokyo (south mission) from 1993 to 1995, and that was a special time for new religions in Japan. In 1995 there was a religious group called Aum Shinri-kyo that released a WWII, Nazi-era nerve agent in the Tokyo subway and killed between thirteen and twenty people, but they sickened and certainly medically damaged thousands of people in the subway.

That changed the environment for new religions in Japan. Since WWII, religions were kind of seen as an intrinsic good—organizations that deserved the benefit of the doubt, organizations that provided important and essential benefits to society. After Aum Shinri-kyo, all of those assumptions were questioned. It was questioned whether these religions should even have a *place* in



Left to right: Greg Wilkinson with organizer Jiang Wu of the University of Arizona.

society and how that place in society should be—if necessary—restricted and controlled. For someone who was serving as an evangelical, to see that kind of paradigm shift within society was absolutely fascinating. I came back from my mission wanting to study religion.

Q: I believe the trend in our religion in the past was more isolationist. Did you want to elaborate on that and the reason for changing that trend to more outreach?

A: I think that's a trend in almost all religions. We have this advancement, in the last hundred years or so, in transportation and communication that has made the world much smaller.

For the LDS Church, there is a historical context to it, in which isolationism was probably a necessary aspect of precaution and perpetuation as the Church tried to respond to the persecution of the nineteenth century. I think that those things are natural, and that's kind of what we saw until probably the later part of the twentieth century. I don't think

that's anything intrinsic in Mormon doctrine or theology. I think curiosity about other religions is a natural characteristic of not only Mormon theology but also Mormons in general; they're interested in other people, they're interested in what they believe, they're interested in finding commonalities and even appreciating differences.

Q: What are the benefits you usually bring up to your students of studying other religions?

A: There's a lot. One of the things is this: I think that the development of testimony is sometimes working through what you *do* believe, but also working through what you *don't* believe. And sometimes those demarcations are better said through the comparison of other belief systems. You start to formulate what the boundaries are of your testimony, and once you start formulating those boundaries, then you can start to flesh out what your testimony really means.

The other thing is that sometimes we realize that we understand



the principles of our belief by looking at similar principles of belief in other cultural constructs. So, sometimes what we believe is simply defined and formulated by the situation. There's a nugget of truth within it, but we don't really understand what that nugget of truth is until we unpack it from its cultural context and see it in a different context. We may *believe* in prayer, but we don't really understand what the absolute, essential *principle* of prayer is until we look at prayer in several different contexts.

You can say, "Oh well, you know, the canon isn't as important in Buddhism because people don't study it the way that we may study our standard works." Then you have to ask yourself, "Well, do we really *have* a definition of scripture?" It could be that not only do we have this one volume of scripture that includes the four standard works, but we take our understanding of living prophets to its natural conclusion and say, "Well, no. Really, Conference Reports from 1840 all the way up to 2015—this is our canon, and it's important for people to know it." Well, then we'd have Latter-day Saints who'd say,

"Well, yeah, I'm not going to read *that*." Even if it is accessible to me now through digitization, it's just too long. So how do I engage it? Do I engage it through a selection of specific parts of it? Or do I engage it as a whole through some sort of liturgical engagement because I believe it to be holy writ? Do I put it in some sort of ritual system? Then we have to start looking at what the actual, universal *principles* of scripture are and not just the ones that come out because of the characteristics of our current canon.

Another benefit is that I really do think that it makes us just more generally and innately *human*, that we basically understand that people yearn for religion in possibly similar ways. Once we start looking at a society of fellow believers, then we start to, in a more genuine way, *appreciate* the benefits that religion brings to us in general and not just in our own tradition. And that's becoming more and more important. This year a new report has come out that the religious divide is no longer sectarian. It's between a group of fellow believers that believe that religion *is* an essential part of life and of society

and those that just don't. I think that comparative religion could create those kind of ties in those kinds of situations in which we can be closer to a family of fellow believers. That might be the safety that we need in order to perpetuate not only our own religious beliefs but the idea of the *importance* of religion in society in general. Those are just a few.

Q: Do you have anything else you would like to remark on?

A: I would certainly like to mention the book that we have coming out through Columbia University Press this year and say that that's kind of the goal for the conference: publishing these things in a reputable university press. I always would want to give full credit and my thanks to the people that sponsored it. It wouldn't be possible without Brent Top, Bob Millet, Thom Wayment, the RSC, Alex Baugh, and we can go on and on. But these individuals take this type of research seriously—not only take it seriously but are enthusiastic about supporting it. They're the real story here. ✕

FACULTY AND STAFF

APPOINTMENTS

In summer term, **Terry B. Ball** began serving as the graduate coordinator of the master's degree programs in Religious Education and Religious Studies—Military Chaplaincy.

Eric Huntsman and **Kerry**

Muhlestein were advanced to the rank of professor of ancient scripture. **Guy L. Dorius** was advanced to the rank of teaching professor (Church history and doctrine).

Andrew C. Reed and **W. Justin Dyer** joined the full-time Church history and doctrine faculty on July 1, 2015.

AWARDS AND HONORS

At the Spring Social on March 21,

Stanley A. Johnson received the B. West Belnap Citizenship Award. **Kenneth L. Alford** received the Richard Lloyd Anderson Research Award. **Keith J. Wilson** received the Robert J. Matthews Teaching Award. **Ray L. Huntington**, **Devan Jensen**, and **Richard Lloyd Anderson** each received the Dean's Award for exceptional service. **Matthew J. Grey** received the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (ancient scripture, academic scholarship) for "The Redeemer to Arise from the House of Dan: Samson, Apocalypticism, and Messianic Hopes in Late Antique Galilee," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 44, no. 4–5 (2013):

553–89. **Scott C. Esplin** received the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (academic scholarship) for his article (coauthored with E. Vance Randall), "Living in Two Worlds: The Development and Transition of Mormon Education in American Society," *History of Education* 43, no. 1 (2014): 3–30.

Camille Fronk Olson received the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (ancient scripture, gospel scholarship) for *Women of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014). **Kip Sperry** received the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award (Church history and doctrine) for *Nauvoo and Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014).

At the university Unforum on April 12, **John L. Hilton** received the Brigham Award for his teaching.

On June 5 the Mormon History Association awarded the Best International Article to **Scott C. Esplin**, E. Vance Randall, **Casey P. Griffiths**, and **Barbara E. Morgan** for "Isolationism, Exceptionalism, and Acculturation: The Internationalization of Mormon Education in Mexico," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 46, no. 4 (2014):

387–404. **Rachel Cope** was awarded the Best Article on Mormon Women's History for "Composing Radical Lives: Women as Autonomous Religious Seekers and Nineteenth-Century Memoirs," in *Nineteenth-Century American Women Write Religion: Lived Theologies and Literature*, ed. Mary McCarten Wearn (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 45–58.

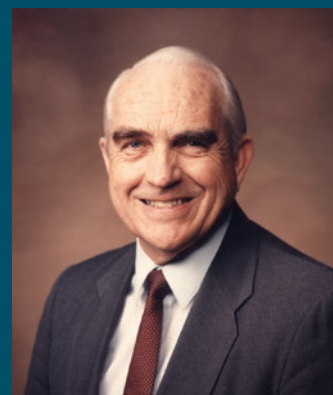
At the 2015 University Conference, **Thomas A. Wayment** received the Phi Kappa Phi Award and **Bart J. Kowallis** received the Religious Education Transfer Professor Award.

EMERITUS/RETIREMENTS

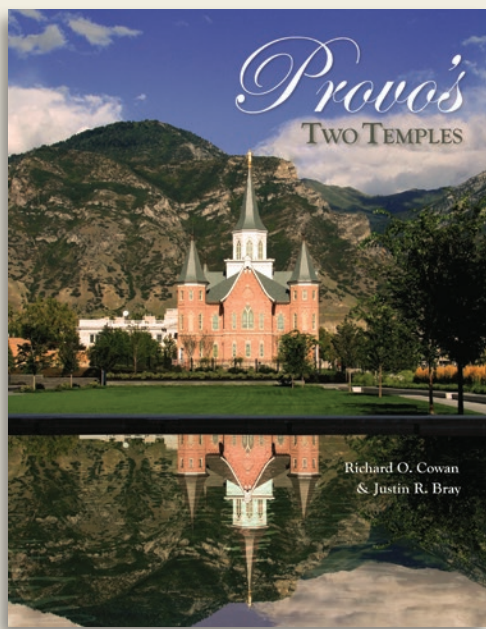
John P. Livingstone (Church history and doctrine) retired in April.

D. Kelly Ogden (ancient scripture) retired in April. ✕

IN MEMORIAM



Leon R. Hartshorn, professor emeritus of Church history and doctrine, passed away on August 11, 2015.



Provo's Two Temples

Richard O. Cowan and Justin R. Bray

Provo, Utah, is the home of two LDS temples, each with a distinctive story. This volume includes a comprehensive account of each of these two temples, which have very different histories. One temple was built from the ground up and dedicated in 1972. The other is like a phoenix, born again of the ashes of a building destroyed by fire. This book includes richly illustrated pictures and text that traces the unique construction, history, and many other details that help tell the stories of each of Provo's two temples.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2965-5, Retail: US \$29.99

NEW RSC PUBLICATIONS

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Rediscovering the Sites of the Restoration: The 1888 Travel Writings of

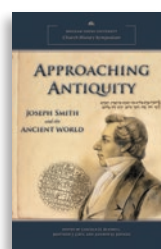
Mormon Historian Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black

Editors: Reid Neilson, Justin R. Bray, and Alan D. Johnson

On September 6, 1888, three Church history missionaries—Andrew Jenson, Edward Stevenson, and Joseph S. Black—left on a fact-finding mission to the Church's historic sites in Missouri, Illinois, New York, Ohio,

and Iowa, spending a majority of their time visiting the sacred spaces of the Restoration. The observations they made were the subjects of a lengthy correspondence to the *Deseret News*. These letters were later compiled into a pamphlet, allowing the Saints in the west to vicariously experience the early days of the Restoration. Some notable historical themes in their observations include a desire for the establishment and redemption of Zion and the promise that righteous Saints would be restored to their lands to build up Zion.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2960-0,
Retail: US \$31.99



Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World

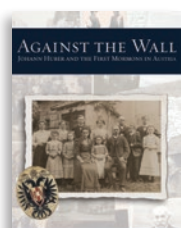
Editors: Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges

This volume is a collection of essays by prominent LDS scholars—including Richard Bushman and David Holland—who discuss the interest in the ancient world shared by Joseph Smith and the early Latter-day Saints. Topics include Joseph Smith's fascination with the ancient Americas, his interaction with the Bible, his study of Hebrew

and Greek, his reading of Jewish and Christian apocryphal writings, and his work with the Book of Abraham in the context of nineteenth-century Egyptology. Together, these essays demonstrate that Joseph Smith's interests in antiquity played an important role in his prophetic development as he sought to recover ancient scripture, restore the ancient Church, and bring the Latter-day Saints into fellowship with the sacred past.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2966-2,

Retail: US \$34.99



**Against the Wall:
Johann Huber and
the First Mormons
in Austria**

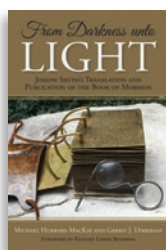
Roger P. Minert

This is the
fascinating and
inspiring story of Johann Huber, one
of Austria's earliest LDS converts.

Huber was a controversial political figure in his town of Haag but soon went from the frying pan into the fire when he informed his neighbors of his LDS baptism in Munich in 1900. For the next decade, he weathered relentless persecution from friends, neighbors, Catholic clerics, the local public school, and government officials. Despite attacks from determined opponents, Huber was extraordinarily loyal to his adoptive faith and played a lead role in laying the foundation of the Church in Austria and in its ongoing legacy.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2933-4,

Retail: US \$23.99



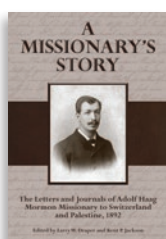
**From Darkness
unto Light:
Joseph Smith's
Translation and
Publication of the
Book of Mormon**
Michael Hubbard

MacKay and Gerrit Dirkmaat

This book was written to provide a detailed explanation of how Joseph Smith and the scribes who served with him described the process of translating the gold plates. It also tells of the difficulties encountered as they sought to publish the completed book. Although both members and academics alike often think of this story as well known, recent insights and discoveries associated with the efforts by the Church History Department to publish *The Joseph Smith Papers* have provided a fuller, richer understanding of the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2888-7,

Retail: US \$24.99



**A Missionary's
Story: The Letters
and Journals of
Adolf Haag,
Mormon Missionary
to Switzerland and
Palestine, 1892**

Editors: Larry W.

Draper and Kent P. Jackson

This is the personal narrative of missionary Adolf Haag, a German immigrant living in the small community of Payson, Utah, when he was called to be a missionary in Switzerland and Germany. This book contains the journals Haag kept

during his mission, letters he sent in preparation for it, and all the known letters he sent home while he was serving. These documents chronicle the willingness of a young man to accept a call to serve the cause of a religion he fervently believed in. They record the challenges he faced leaving behind his home, his business, and his wife and two young children. They read, in large part, like sermons, extolling the virtues of trusting in God, exercising patience and forbearance, and staying true to the faith.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2959-4,

Retail: US \$27.99



**Conversations with
Mormon Historians**

Editors: Alexander L.

Baugh and

Reid L. Neilson

The interviews in
this volume tell

the stories of remarkable men and women who have made careers out of researching, writing, and teaching about the past. Friends and colleagues conducted these conversations over a decade or so. All were previously published in the *Mormon Historical Studies* journal or *Religious Educator* periodical and now are brought together as a single book of personal essays. As we review and reflect on the personal lives and remarkable careers featured in this volume, we sense that many of these historians feel that they were prepared or given a definite sense of mission and professional calling that stretches well back in time.

ISBN: 978-0-8425-2890-0,

Retail: US \$34.99 ✂



Gratitude by Design

WHEN ALEX MASTERSON was given the opportunity to express his appreciation to those who support the Religious Studies Center (RSC), he couldn't help but paint a pretty picture.

You see, the senior communications major from Irving, Texas, has an unusual pair of talents—writing and designing—and he has drawn on both as a student employee.

“The RSC put me in a real-world environment where I could use those skills,” Alex says. “The job has enabled me to get the kind of experiences that will allow me to get a job after college. Donors have truly given me a future.”

Following graduation Alex plans to become a freelance writer, editor, and designer. “I hope to publish my own children’s books as well,” he adds.

RSC production supervisor Brent Nordgren believes that students like Alex are indispensable. “We would have a hard time publishing what we do without them,” he claims. “To us, every dollar of every donation is a priceless gift.”

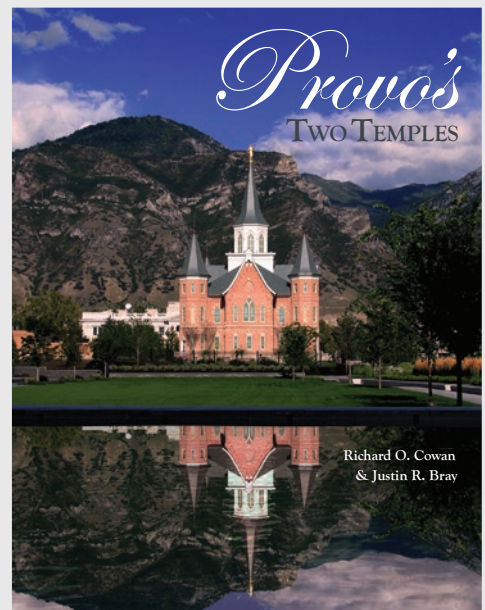
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2016 Student Symposium. Friday, February 19, 2016

2016 Church History Symposium Thursday and Friday, March 3–4, 2016

See page 3 for more information.