

“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.