Faculty Perspectives and Experiences at the Jerusalem Center

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Introductions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Jabbok River in Jordan. Courtesy Gaye Strathearn.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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