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Foreword

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A view from the southwest of the Dome of the Rock Mosque, third holiest site in Islam, built in the seventh century C.E. to commemorate Muhammad's ascent to heaven. This picture was taken by *Church News* photographer J. Malan Heslop prior to 1967 when Jerusalem was still under Jordanian control. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

Foreword

A fortuitous confluence of talents and interests launched this special issue of *BYU Studies* over two years ago. No one sitting around the editorial conference table that day could have imagined the heightened interest in Islam that now fills the world. So at this time especially, we are pleased to present this unique volume of interfaith scholarship. Now more than ever, the peoples of the world need to understand and love one another. No lasting peace will be found in this world until there is peace among religions, that is, a peace built on religious grounds.

Although obvious nuances and important differences also exist, Latter-day Saints hold much in common with the values of religious people everywhere and openly recognize, as the First Presidency declared on February 15, 1978, that great religious leaders such as Muhammad, the Reformers, and others surely “received a portion of God’s light.” As the following studies by Latter-day Saint scholars readily demonstrate, notable intersections between the ideals of Mormons and Muslims include such anchors as an unequivocal faith in God, scripture, prophetic revelation, daily prayer, family solidarity, generous care for the poor, submissive fasting and repentance, worshiping in sacred places, and struggling to overcome the evils of this world. These and other dimensions of the broad and varied Islamic experience are explored here in many ways: historically, doctrinally, sociologically, comparatively, linguistically, artistically, critically, institutionally, and personally.

The interest of Latter-day Saints in all truth, wherever it may be found, has deep and enduring roots. Joseph Smith taught, “Friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’; [it is designed] to revolutionize and civilize the world, and cause wars and contentions to cease and men to become friends and brothers.” Hence, he charged the Saints to “gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 316). That spirit has guided the authors and editors in producing this extraordinary publication.

Animated by friendship, mutual appreciation, and the desire to treasure all the truths in the world pertaining to life, we are grateful for this valuable collection of sincere and serious studies. May they promote insight, respect, and understanding among readers everywhere.

Merrill J. Bateman
President, Brigham Young University

John W. Welch
Editor-in-Chief, *BYU Studies*